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Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6119th meeting

Tuesday, 5 May 2009, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Eritain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

Letter dated 22 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/920)

Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2009/221)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 22 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/920)

Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2009/221)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Nepal in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Acharya (Nepal) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I propose, with the consent of the Council, to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal.

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Landgren to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process (S/2009/221).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Ms. Karin Landgren.

I now give her the floor.

Ms. Landgren: The report of the Secretary-General now before the Council (S/2009/221) provides an overview of developments in Nepal's peace process and a midterm review of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), as requested by the Council. It describes long-awaited steps by the Government of Nepal towards resolving the continued existence in the country of two armies and also toward the discharge of some 4,000 disqualified Maoist army personnel, including minors.

Since January 2009, there have been public consultations on the new Constitution, and the Constituent Assembly has continued to develop concept papers. Several long-dormant Government bodies have been revived, and in April by-elections were held in six constituencies in a relatively peaceful and orderly atmosphere. The progress has been, in the language of the report, not insignificant, and the tone of the report is thus guardedly positive.

The report, however, also warns of difference among political parties, the high level of acrimony and weak consultation over major decisions and the atmosphere of mistrust. It notes the persistent tension between the Ministry of Defence and the Nepal Army with the political parties publicly lining up to support one or the other. And in the fortnight or so since this report was written, the deeply polarizing political stand-off between the Nepal Army and the leader of the governing coalition, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), has come to a head culminating in the resignation yesterday of Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda".

In the lead-up to that event, considerable gaps had opened in the interpretation of the powers of the President and the chiefs of Nepal Army staff, and the Supreme Court had become increasingly drawn into adjudicating such conflicts of interpretation. The Maoists have seen in the position taken by the Army chiefs and the other main political parties an attempt to undermine their leadership of the Government, while their detractors consider the Maoists' actions as proof of their intention to capture State power.

Those developments have serious implications for the functioning of government and for the nature of the State to be shaped by Nepal's next Constitution. In the short term, there is a risk of paralysis, with possibly protracted negotiations on forming a new Government and a stalling of preparations for the discharge of the

disqualified and the integration and rehabilitation of verified Maoist army personnel.

The Prime Minister's resignation followed a number of developments over the past two weeks. On 20 April, the Cabinet requested General Katawal to provide clarification of three recent situations. Under the Army Act, the chief of the Army can be dismissed by the Government, if it deems it necessary, after being given the opportunity to provide clarification, and that request was widely thought to herald the chief's imminent dismissal.

The first of the three situations was the recruitment by the Nepal Army of more than 3,000 new personnel in late 2008, notwithstanding a prohibition in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of November 2006 and the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies on the recruitment of additional personnel by either the Nepal Army or the Maoist army. Mr. Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, described that situation in detail to the Council in his 16 January briefing (see S/PV.6069), which is a matter of public record. UNMIN has taken the position since 2007 that any recruitment by either army would violate those agreements. The Army was directed by the Government to stop the recruitment, but it did not.

The second situation concerned the Army's reinstatement of eight retiring brigadier generals whose services were not recommended for extension by the Ministry of Defence, and the third concerned the withdrawal of Nepal Army participants from several events at the national games after Maoist army athletes were allowed at the last minute to take part.

The issue of Nepal army recruitment and that of the brigadier generals' non-extension have been brought before the Supreme Court, which is expected to rule on both issues this month. The broad charge levelled by the Prime Minister was that the Army chief had repeatedly defied the authority of the elected Government. In his response to the Prime Minister's Office, on 21 April, the Army chief reportedly stated that he had never challenged legitimate civilian authority over the Government, while also claiming that the Prime Minister lacks the constitutional authority to fire him.

Since the elections in April last year, which brought the Maoists to power, senior Army officers have repeatedly asserted that only the Nepal Army stands between the country and totalitarianism. The Maoists have contributed to feeding such fears through continued references to capturing State power. On 24 April, some media sources carried a detailed account of plans for a military coup, sourcing the story to senior Army officers.

The Prime Minister had said that he intended to resolve this issue through consensus and had reportedly secured the agreement of the leaders of the largest governing coalition partner, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (UML), as well as the major opposition party, the Nepali Congress, to remove the Army chief. However, in the days after 19 April, the party political dynamics shifted rapidly and such agreements as there may have been fell apart. On 3 May, the UML pulled out of the Government, leaving the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) in a minority.

The active profile of the President, Ram Baran Yadav, as those events unfolded raised constitutional questions and eroded relations between his Office and that of the Prime Minister. On 3 May, the Cabinet, boycotted by some members of the coalition Government, formally decided to sack the Army chief, and the Prime Minister appointed the second-in-command of the Army, Chief of General Staff Kul Bahadur Khadka, to act in the top post. The Prime Minister also gave a letter of dismissal to General Katawal.

Late in the evening of 3 May, the President wrote to the Army chief, instructing him to continue in his post. The President noted that the Interim Constitution designated him as the protector, patron and Supreme Commander of the Nepal Army and that steps taken by the Government to dismiss the Army chief and appoint a new chief had been constitutionally and procedurally incomplete. In a public statement yesterday, the President said that his directive did not violate constitutional provisions, as the UCPN-M had not consulted with its coalition partners.

The Prime Minister had previously threatened to take his party out of the Government, if no satisfactory compromise were found, and he did so yesterday, 4 May. In his televised address to the nation, Prime Minister Prachanda urged the nation to respect the peace process and the letter and spirit of the Interim Constitution, saying that his resignation was intended to allow a way out of the ongoing political crisis. He criticized "foreign and international forces" for

interfering in Nepal's politics and for undermining national integrity and sovereignty.

This is a volatile moment in Nepal's peace process. The aim of the process in 2005 was to end the war and hold a Constituent Assembly election towards building a more democratic Nepal. It was premised on the recognition that the decade-long conflict could not be resolved militarily. The Maoists hold 40 per cent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly — more than twice the number of any other party — and the Constitution cannot be completed without their support. Significant progress has been made, including the successful conduct of the elections, the ongoing work of the Constituent Assembly and the declaration of a Republic, which brought a peaceful end to the monarchy. However, many challenges remain. The challenges from the Army chief to control and oversight by an elected Government, and the countermanding of a Cabinet order by the President, have exposed ambiguities in the Interim Constitution and deepened mistrust among the parties, and they have also empowered actors who are expected to remain above politics. The development of multiple power centres represents a real risk to the peace process.

In announcing his resignation, the Prime Minister pledged to continue to fulfil his party's peace process commitments while in opposition. Many such commitments remain to be fulfilled — above all, the drafting of a Constitution and the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel. The Maoist army has only recently come under the authority of the State through the Special Committee — formed, in accordance with article 146 of the Interim Constitution, to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate Maoist army combatants — which held its first meeting on 16 January. A Technical Committee, established on 27 March, has spent its first three weeks in dedicated activity, undertaking consultations, including visits to Maoist army cantonment sites, and, after a short hiatus, has now quietly resumed meeting. Senior Maoist army personnel challenged the Technical Committee to act independently of party political affiliation, which the Committee has pledged to do.

Under the peace process agreement of 25 June 2008, the Special Committee was to reach and implement decisions on integration and rehabilitation within six months. However, the Army chief has taken a restrictive stance on the integration into the Nepal Army of former Maoist army personnel. Even befo the current political developments, both the Spec Committee and the Technical Committee said that th were unlikely to be able meet that deadline. T question is whether the situation of the Maoist arm can be satisfactorily resolved if the Maoists rema outside the Government.

As the Council is aware, UNMIN now has a ve substantially reduced presence in Nepal, with 2 personnel, including 73 arms monitors. UNMIN priority is to encourage full implementation of t Comprehensive Peace Agreement and, to that end, conduct its monitoring responsibilities, including t management of the Joint Monitoring Coordinati Committee, the dispute-resolution mechanism th brings together senior officers of the Nepal Army an the Maoist army. Since late March, UNMIN has le discussions with the Ministry of Peace an Reconstruction on the discharge of disqualified Maoi army personnel, including minors. Together with t United Nations Development Programme and UNICE we seek a successful discharge and reintegrati exercise that meets international standards, wi adequate access by independent monitors and genuin removal of the disqualified from military supervision.

The Office of the United Nations Hig Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal is mandate to monitor the human rights situation, advise th Government on human rights matters and provid technical cooperation to strengthen national huma rights institutions. That mandate will expire on 9 Jun five weeks from today. Its extension, for which Nepal main political parties have expressed support, shoul not become a victim of the present fluid situation.

Unfulfilled commitments are the Achilles heel o the peace process, and they threaten the peac dividends that the people of Nepal expect and so richl deserve. Last year's elections marked a stron beginning towards fulfilling the commitment to greate political inclusiveness. The Government's subsequen dialogue with agitating ethnic and indigenous group has remained fairly perfunctory, with weak follow through. Security in the Tarai remains a matter o serious concern, with many active armed groups an general impunity for those engaged in violence. Ther is a risk that the latest political developments wi divert the already limited attention being paid to thes issues.

In the present situation, there is a serious deficit of trust among the principal political actors. Since January, issues relating to the Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies and decisions by the Defence Ministry over the army have been brought to the Supreme Court, as has now the President's decision to countermand the Cabinet decision on the Army chief. This frequent recourse to the Court is a manifestation of weak political agreement and an absence of other effective mechanisms. A high-level, multiparty monitoring mechanism was envisaged in the peace agreements. It is still needed and should be formed.

The peace process that Nepal has driven forward since 2005 has been remarkable, and the events of 2008 were of historic magnitude. The parties should urgently take steps to rebuild trust and work together in the spirit of compromise and consensus that is needed to protect these achievements and to ensure further progress in the coming weeks and months. The next key steps — addressing the future of the Maoist army personnel and drafting the new constitution — will be extremely difficult to achieve without a greater degree of political cooperation and a common vision. An inclusive, concerted and well managed consultative process is vital to ensuring successful and timely outcomes for both issues.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Landgren for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I would like to start, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and thanking Ambassador Heller for his excellent presidency of the Council last month.

The United Kingdom very much welcomes the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2009/221) on the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). We are also grateful for today's briefing by the Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Karin Landgren.

We are deeply concerned by recent developments on the ground and share the Secretary-General's regret, expressed in his 4 May statement, at the events leading up to Prime Minister Prachanda's resignation. But, like the Secretary-General, we are also encouraged by the Maoist party's assurances of its commitment to the peace process and by the comments from across the political spectrum stressing the importance of proceeding on the basis of consensus.

Given recent developments, it is all the more important that we hold all the political parties in Nepal to commitments made under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. All of us in the international community have a role to play here. We must support Nepalese efforts to resolve this crisis in a way that does not jeopardize the important gains made since the Agreement was signed in 2006 — gains rightly highlighted in the Secretary-General's report.

We will need to monitor the situation very closely in the coming weeks and months. An objective assessment of the situation on the ground will be an important part of the Council's deliberations ahead of the end of UNMIN's mandate on 23 July. In that regard, we believe that it is important that the Secretary-General's next report include analysis of the implications of recent developments for the future of the peace process and for the role played by the United Nations and wider international engagement in Nepal.

However, it is important that we not seek to reach such conclusions prematurely. Our and UNMIN's immediate efforts must be focused on helping the Nepalese peacefully to overcome this crisis and to move forward. Even if a solution can be reached quickly, it is clear that much remains to be done. Even before the current crisis, the Nepalese authorities' prediction that the integration process could be completed by 15 July looked unrealistic. In our view, that is and remains a substantial process involving complex decisions that require political commitment by all parties in the spirit of the peace process agreements.

For our part, we will continue to offer our full and active support to the people of Nepal and to the peace process.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I want to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Council and to underscore our eagerness to work closely with you in the month ahead. I also want to thank Ambassador Heller for his truly exceptional leadership of the Council last month during a challenging period. We are very grateful.

I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Karin Landgren, the Representative of the Secretary-General

in Nepal. We are pleased to welcome her here for the first time in her new role and we are grateful for her briefing. We also want to thank her and her staff for their efforts to carry out the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and to help the people of Nepal move forward with the peace process.

The events that have shaken Nepal over the past few days, leading to the 4 May resignation of the Prime Minister, make it abundantly clear that Nepal's leaders must re-commit themselves to implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We in the United States urge all parties to abide by the Interim Constitution and to use it as a basis for resolving the current impasse. Political parties must engage in dialogue to resolve their disputes and must, as appropriate, resort to the courts. As Nepal's political parties move to end the current stand-off, they should ensure the continuity of legitimate and effective government. The resignation of the Prime Minister must not be allowed to create a political vacuum, and the formation of a new Government must not drag on for months.

We certainly remind all political parties of the need to avoid tactics that might lead to bloodshed, including large demonstrations, calls for general strikes and provocative statements and actions. In particular, we urge the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to remain involved in the political process. That includes participating in the Constituent Assembly and in all peace process-related bodies, including those related to the effort to draft a constitution.

The continued misuse of political youth groups also threatens the peace process. The United States urges the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to renounce all violence committed by its militant Young Communist League and to take concrete steps to transform that group into an exclusively non-violent one. Equally, we urge other parties to do the same with their own youth wings and to ensure that their activities are peaceful and constructive.

The Special Committee should now continue its consultations, and the newly established Technical Committee should move to implement its decisions. As one step forward, we hope that the Government of Nepal will move immediately to adopt the suggestions of the Secretary-General's Representative, to consolidate arms and soldiers into fewer cantonments and to discharge minors.

We very much hope that the people of Nepal and their leaders will not lose sight of the enormous progress that they have made towards establishing peace. They have peacefully ended a violent insurgency and started a process of reconciliation that holds the promise of long-term security, stability and peace. Those accomplishments must not be threatened by a failure to implement parts of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that were fully agreed to by all parties, but for now those achievements remain at risk while so many important aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement are still unfulfilled.

The Maoist-led Government and the Nepal Army must recognize that lasting democracy is rooted in the principle of civilian control of the military and depends on the prudent exercise of that control. As the Secretary-General's report notes, some progress has been made towards integrating the People's Liberation Army and the Nepal Army, but those advances are threatened by infighting. Like the presidential statement before the Council today, we call on Nepal's Government and all political parties to recommit themselves to working together in the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and under the terms of the Interim Constitution. The parties should ensure continuity of Government, strengthen multiparty democracy and protect and promote human rights.

As the end of UNMIN's current mandate approaches next month, we will look forward to consulting with Nepal's leaders and our Council colleagues on how best the Council can contribute to lasting peace and stability in Nepal. The country has come too far to let itself fall back.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of May. Our appreciation goes also to Ambassador Heller and his team for their excellent leadership during the month of April.

At the outset, I wish to thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, for her detailed briefing on the activities of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). I should also like to pay tribute to Mr. Ian Martin, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Nepal, who concluded his excellent work in February.

I would like to begin by expressing deep concern about the political developments of the past few days, following the announcement of the dismissal of the

chief of Army staff and the resignation of the Prime Minister. These may have serious implications for the future democratic process in Nepal. We fully support the Secretary-General's appeal to all concerned for restraint and political consensus.

The United Nations has been actively engaged in the peace process since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was concluded in 2006. During the more than two years of UNMIN's presence, the people of Nepal and the parties concerned have achieved historic breakthroughs despite continuing challenges. The election of a Constituent Assembly and the transformation to a federal democratic republic are commendable achievements. We highly value the vital supporting role of UNMIN and appeal to all concerned to strictly adhere to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Consultations on a new constitution have been making steady progress. Given the vital importance of drafting a document so basic to the future course of the country, we understand the cautious approach taken by the people of Nepal, as long as it is well grounded in peaceful political dialogue. Despite the recent political developments, we are encouraged by the Maoist party's assurances of its commitment to the peace process, including continued participation in the drafting of the constitution. We urge the people of Nepal to maintain the momentum they have generated so far and to see their efforts through to fruition.

The demobilization and integration of Maoist soldiers is a greater challenge. The Special Committee has begun its work and has established a Technical Committee. But this still remains a task that is fundamental to the peace process and is very difficult to achieve. Based on the latest assessment by the Secretary-General, we are concerned that it may not be realistic to expect the necessary work to be completed within the next three months.

The parties need to engage in consultations among themselves, in good faith and in a spirit of cooperation, in order to reach a decision on the structures of security institutions. Despite the recent political turbulence centred on recruitment for the Nepal Army and the People's Liberation Army, the status of senior officials of the Army and the resignation of the Prime Minister, we hope that all parties will remember why and under what conditions they embarked on this peace process three years ago. It was the outcome of the wisdom and courage of the people of Nepal to take the initiative to bring a long conflict to an end. All parties should adhere to the Agreement on Monitoring the Management of Arms and Armies, which clearly and specifically stipulates restrictions on the Nepal Army and the People's Liberation Army.

It is time for the parties to demonstrate such wisdom again, by resolving outstanding issues which block the way towards durable peace and prosperity for the country. Most urgently, a solution should be found regarding how the 19,000 Maoist army personnel who have been confined to the cantonments for two years can contribute to the reconstruction and development of the country.

Japan sincerely hopes that all parties engage actively in political dialogue and make best use of the technical expertise and support provided by UNMIN. We look forward to UNMIN following through on its successful supporting role.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Japan's commitment to the peace process in Nepal.

Mr. La Yifan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, holding the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We also wish to thank Ambassador Heller for his outstanding leadership as President of the Security Council during the month of April.

I wish to thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and head of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), for her briefing. I thank her and UNMIN for their hard work.

The Constituent Assembly of Nepal has begun its work and will be able to complete the drafting of the constitution by May 2010. The integration and rehabilitation of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) combatants has been moving forward steadily. The demobilization of disqualified soldiers is under way, and the Government of Nepal has promised to complete that task by 15 July. We view this important progress positively, and we appreciate the tireless efforts of the political parties and the people of Nepal to that end.

We take note of the latest developments in Nepal. We hope that the parties concerned will keep the overall situation in mind, handle their differences

appropriately and make a joint effort to safeguard the peace process in Nepal. We expect and believe that the Government and the people of Nepal have the ability and wisdom to continue their efforts, through dialogue and consultation, to resolve all the legacy issues that continue to impede the peace process and that, on the basis of the plans that are in place, they will achieve lasting peace, stability and development.

The entire staff of UNMIN is fully dedicated and has been making positive contributions to the peace process in Nepal; it has our appreciation. We encourage UNMIN to continue to properly monitor arms and armies in accordance with the mandate of the Security Council and to cooperate actively with the Special Committee with a view to completing, at an early date, the integration and resettlement of the UCPN-M combatants.

It should be pointed out that, in the final analysis, the peace process in Nepal should be led by the people of Nepal. We believe that, with the support of the international community, Nepal will be able to re-embark on the path towards peace and development.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for the month of May. You may rest assured, as always, of our full support and cooperation. We wish also to congratulate Ambassador Claude Heller and the Mexican delegation and to thank them for their excellent presidency last month. I thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General, for her up-to-date briefing.

My delegation takes positive note of the overall relatively calm and stable security situation in Nepal during the reporting period. We share the sense of cautious optimism described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/221) regarding progress on major components of the peace process in Nepal, in particular those related to the drafting of the constitution and discussions on the future of the two armies.

At the same time, we share the common concern about a number of unresolved issues — related essentially to ethnic and political groups, the form of governance and the new federal structure of the country. We are particularly worried about the latest political rift in the Nepalese leadership. We call upon all political parties to exercise restraint and give top priority to stability by promoting national unity and resuming dialogue, in the spirit of compromise and reconciliation, to expedite the peace process. We hope that all parties in the Government of Nepal will build upon the hard-won progress made so far in order to continue to work together for the common good of the whole nation.

Given the outstanding role played by the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), we commend the Mission for its efforts in the area of arms monitoring and supporting the work of the Special and Technical Committees in the past reporting period. Taking into consideration the Nepalese Prime Minister's request for further support from UNMIN for both the Special and Technical Committees and bearing in mind the ownership of the country's peace process by the Nepalese Government and people, we believe that UNMIN should maintain its close cooperation with the Government of Nepal and other United Nations agencies to help sustain peace and stability and expedite the necessary activities within its mandate to complete its tasks. We reaffirm our support for the role of the United Nations in coordinating international development assistance for Nepal. We join in the commitment made by the international community to support the peace and development process on which the Nepalese people and Government have embarked.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): Let me start by congratulating you once again, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You have our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties. My warmest thanks also go to Ambassador Heller, who presided over the Security Council last month with great success. I also wish to thank Ms. Karin Landgren for her briefing. As this is the first time that she addresses the Council, I take this opportunity to congratulate her on the assumption of her duties. I wish her every success. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative report (S/2009/221), which reflects recent developments in the country in an accurate and objective manner. In that regard, we share the Secretary-General's cautious optimism as to the implementation of the peace process.

Since the beginning of this year, there have been a number of concrete developments. In that regard, the regular consultations on the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel and the progress achieved by the Constituent Assembly in drafting a constitution are indeed worth underlining.

We also welcome the appointment of the members of the National Security Council, which has met for the first time in six years to make recommendations on the mobilization, operation and use of the Nepal Army.

However, as reported by the Secretary-General, the level of cooperation among the major stakeholders in the peace process remains far from adequate. In fact, the resignation yesterday of Prime Minister Prachanda was a stark manifestation of the situation. As such, the decision of the Prime Minister and what it entails for the political stability of the country are a source of significant concern. We sincerely hope that the Government crisis will be resolved swiftly and in a democratic manner and not constitute a major setback. It should in no way jeopardize the peace process.

Accordingly, we call on all parties in Nepal to work together in the spirit of compromise and cooperation that is necessary to keep the peace process on track. As we see it, it is the common responsibility of all political actors to continue to adhere to the principles and the understanding that led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November 2006.

Along the same lines, the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), which has been most helpful throughout the peace process, obviously has an important role to play in this new situation too. Indeed, UNMIN seems to enjoy the full confidence and support of all Nepalese parties. We need to make the best use of UNMIN. At this point, I very much look forward to hearing the views and assessment of Ms. Landgren as to what more could be done to facilitate the resolution of the crisis through democratic means. On the other hand, as to the future of UNMIN, I find the discussion on possible exit strategies for UNMIN a bit premature, especially in the light of the current situation. Indeed, the urgent need now is to address the current political crisis and to support all efforts that will keep the peace process on track.

The United Nations and the international community must remain committed to supporting the process on which Nepal has embarked for the consolidation of peace and the improvement of the lives of its people. As such, the main conditions for ending the United Nations Mission — namely, political stability and peaceful coexistence — are yet to be achieved fully. The Council should therefore continue to monitor closely the political situation in Nepal with a view to reaching the right conclusions before 23 July 2009.

Finally, we support the draft presidential statement before the Security Council, which reflects the expectations of the Council with regard both to Nepal and to UNMIN.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are confident that, under your guidance, the success of the Council's work is more than guaranteed. I am also certain that you will have the cooperation of all the members of the Security Council, just as we did during our presidency in April.

I would like to thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, for her detailed briefing today on the situation in the country and the work of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). My delegation is grateful to Ms. Landgren, who has assumed, with great professionalism and sense of responsibility, the duties that the Secretary-General has conferred upon her as she succeeds Mr. Ian Martin. We trust that Ms. Landgren will continue to make efforts to contribute to and achieve normalization in the political situation in Nepal, as well as to finalize pending matters in the peace process.

Until just a few days ago, the report (S/2009/221) before us today could have been read against a backdrop of optimism as a result of the significant progress made in recent months with regard to the peace process in Nepal. The Special Committee, which is charged with overseeing the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist army, met for the first time on 16 January, shortly before the adoption of resolution 1864 (2009). It has since held various meetings to begin fulfilling its mandate and established the Technical Committee, which will be entrusted with supporting the Special Committee. Likewise, there has also been progress in the drafting of the constitution and the establishment of the Constitutional Council and the National Security Council, which have held their first meetings after several years of deadlock on this issue.

Despite all that, events in recent days have led to a political crisis in Nepal that could jeopardize the peace process as a whole. As other members of the Council have done this morning, my delegation would

also like to express its great concern at the events that have taken place, whose consequences are yet to be fully known. We therefore call on all the parties concerned to resume dialogue as soon as possible, so as to continue to strengthen national unity and successfully conclude the peace process.

In the light of the current crisis between the President and the Prime Minister, we believe it particularly relevant to recall that recruitment by either of the two former opposing armies constitutes a violation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. We support the work that UNMIN has done in that regard. In order to emerge from the current stalemate and avoid the risk of a more serious crisis, it is necessary to have the cooperation of all actors and political parties involved in the process of reconciliation and national unity in Nepal.

Addressing pending aspects of the peace process — such as the establishment of a new constitutional order, the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel and the demobilization of minors involved in the conflict — requires constructive coordination among the parties and the support of the international community.

Similarly, given the central place of human rights in the peace process as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, my Government calls upon the Government of Nepal to continue its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, my delegation believes that the adoption of the draft presidential statement that has been prepared is extremely timely and appropriate.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): First of all, Sir, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May. We look forward to close cooperation with you. I should also like to thank Ambassador Heller of Mexico for his presidency last month, under truly challenging circumstances.

I wish to thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal, for her comprehensive briefing and, especially, for the update she gave us on ongoing developments.

Austria shares the serious concern expressed by other speakers about the current political crisis in Nepal. The dispute between Prime Minister and the Nepal Army, which was followed by the Prime Minister's decision to resign, has clearly aggravated the rift between political parties and deepened the existing atmosphere of mistrust. It is of great importance for all parties in Nepal to exercise restraint and to re-engage in a cooperative and inclusive political dialogue with the aim of overcoming the current impasse. In particular, we hope for the expeditious formation of a stable Government that enjoys the widest possible consensus. It is the responsibility of all Nepalese stakeholders to ensure that the peace process, which had finally seen promising progress in recent months, does not lose its momentum once again.

Let me add that Austria was indeed encouraged by the positive developments in the peace process that had taken place over the first three months of this year, including progress made on the process of drafting a constitution. We wish a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Nepal. Reaching agreement on the form of governance and a federal structure for the country is clearly a challenge that bears great significance for Nepal's future. As I said on an earlier occasion, as a country that has specific expertise in these matters, Austria is prepared to offer support and expertise.

Progress had also been made on disarmament and demobilization, in particular with regard to the issue of the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel. It is very unfortunate that, in spite of the declared determination and the efforts shown by the political parties in Nepal to work together in a constructive manner in the framework of the Special Committee and the Technical Committee, this issue now seems to be at the core of the current crisis. We appeal to all the parties concerned to adhere to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and all related agreements and encourage them to resume their work as soon as possible.

In this context, we are also concerned about the fact that the discharge from the Maoist army cantonments of nearly 3,000 Maoist army personnel disqualified as minors will now be further delayed. We learned with great appreciation that talks on the modalities of this discharge had started and that preparations were under way prior to the current impasse. There is a need for all stakeholders to ensure that these steps have not been in vain and will lead to a swift implementation of the assurances given to the

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, in December 2008 that the discharge and rehabilitation of minors would proceed without further delay. We also believe that this task should be carried out in a transparent manner, in conformity with international standards and in close consultation and cooperation with the United Nations. The proliferation of militant youth wings affiliated with political groups is another concern in this context.

I also wish to stress the importance of the fight against impunity. During her official visit to Nepal in March of this year, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, warned that Nepal's peace process could be at risk unless justice is ensured for the victims of past and ongoing human rights abuses. We were encouraged by steps taken by the Nepalese Government to establish accountability for past violations through the development of transitional justice mechanisms. We wish to stress the need for any such mechanism to pay particular attention to the experiences of women and children during the conflict, and we encourage the Nepalese Government to continue its cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women in order to include gender aspects in the transitional justice process, an effort which receives Austrian support.

We concur with the Secretary-General's view that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Nepal can continue to play an important positive role, not only in capacity-building for national human rights institutions, but in maintaining the confidence of all stakeholders in the peace process. We therefore hope that the presence of the office will be extended by the Nepalese authorities.

In view of the difficult current situation and the remaining challenges of the peace process, we encourage all involved in Nepal to take advantage of the expertise of the United Nations Mission in Nepal in supporting the peace process. Austria reaffirms its full support for the Mission and would appreciate it if the Secretary-General could include in his next report an assessment of the impact of the current crisis on the implementation of the peace process as well as the consequences for the United Nations presence on the ground, in particular in view of a possible prolongation of the mandate.

Mr. Koudougou (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I assure you of the close cooperation of my delegation. I wish also to pay tribute to Ambassador Heller and the Mexican delegation for the excellent manner in which they guided our work during the month of April.

I wish also to congratulate Ms. Karin Landgren on her appointment to the post of Representative of the Secretary-General in Nepal and to wish her every success in her mission. I thank her for her briefing this morning.

We are concerned at recent events in Nepal, which led to the resignation of the Prime Minister. Those events show that the situation in that country remains fragile and that a return to stability could be delayed. We therefore call upon political actors in Nepal to opt for dialogue in order to establish a genuine climate of mutual trust and to strengthen the nation's foundations.

The political rift among political actors and the difficulties faced by a number of institutions point to the need for additional efforts to create a more peaceful political climate. It would be a shame if the progress made in the peace process, which is described in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/221), were jeopardized. Moreover, the gains that have been made in drafting a constitution must be safeguarded. We therefore call upon all political actors to agree on a consensus draft.

One of the most difficult pending matters in Nepal is the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel. We therefore welcome the resumption of the work of the Special Committee mandated to follow up on this important issue. The establishment of the Technical Committee to support the Special Committee in its work also represents significant progress.

Similar efforts must be sustained in the field of demobilization, and that is why we call upon the United Nations to continue to support the Nepalese authorities in this area. It is encouraging to note that the establishment of a committee to monitor the implementation of the nine-point agreement has made possible the publication of a report on land and property seized by Maoists.

It is clear that all these achievements can be strengthened only in a peaceful socio-political climate. As a result, that means that efforts to support the development of Nepal must be further strengthened. We hope that the National Development Forum planned for mid-May 2009 will enable the Government to mobilize additional resources for the development of the country. We call upon the country team as well as all partners to sustain their efforts in this regard.

In spite of the recent holding of by-elections, we ask the various parties to discuss their differences with a view to creating a favourable climate for the peace process. We call upon the Government to abide by the commitments made.

In terms of safety and security, we look forward to the National Security Council contributing to the establishment of a healthy atmosphere. In spite of the Government's laudable initiatives, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the fight against impunity and ensuring respect for the human rights of minorities remain problematic issues. In this regard, we welcome the Government's significant efforts to establish mechanisms for transitional justice and for the fight against impunity. The United Nations, countries of the region and all of Nepal's partners must join in.

To conclude, we would like to thank and renew our support for the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) through the Arms Monitoring Office and the Political Affairs Office. We urge the Mission to pay particular attention to the genuine demobilization of minors and call upon the Nepalese Government to honour its commitments in this area.

As we have seen, in spite of the progress that has been made, the situation in Nepal remains fragile and volatile. It is for that reason that my delegation, while fully subscribing to the progressive draw-down of UNMIN, would like to call upon the Security Council to undertake it prudently in order to preserve the progress that has been achieved to date. We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for the preparation of a draft presidential statement, which my delegation supports.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like, Sir, to start by congratulating you and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would reaffirm my delegation's cooperation in every way necessary. We would also like to commend the Mexican delegation and Ambassador Heller for their work last month in the presidency of the Security Council, for which we are very grateful.

My delegation is grateful for the briefing given by Ms. Landgren. We are pleased to welcome her to the Security Council for the first time, and we support her efforts at the helm of United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to ensure a successful outcome to the reconciliation and peace processes in Nepal. We would also like to also state our gratitude to Mr. Ian Martin for his endeavours.

In view of recent political events, my delegation calls upon the parties, in the interests of stability, to strengthen the political dialogue which has come about at the cost of so much sacrifice. We have reached a crossroads where the political and military actors must continue to work together in a spirit of compromise that will enable them to carry out the agenda agreed to at the time of the extension of the mandate of UNMIN last January.

My delegation is of the view that it is crucial for the parties to place national interests first and foremost and that their conduct be in keeping with the commitments expressed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2006 and in conformity with the will of the people as expressed in last year's elections. Consolidating a multiparty political system that is inclusive, transparent, democratic and respectful of human rights is an objective that will favour peace and reconciliation.

My delegation shares the concerns of the delegations of Austria and Burkina Faso with regard to the reintegration of minors, the issue of human rights and the fight against impunity. We also hope that particular attention will be paid to situations that could jeopardize the peace process, in particular, situations that concern the integration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants into the Army as well as situations regarding human rights. Political players who possess the means to resolve the current crisis must work in a greater spirit of cooperation.

This political process must make it possible to build a better society in which the conditions necessary for national unity are to be found. Costa Rica will support all efforts to that end and encourages Ms. Landgren, as the representative of the United

Nations, to continue the good offices that will ensure progress on pending issues.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): We welcome Ms. Karin Landgren and thank her for her briefing on the latest developments in Nepal, especially regarding the peace process. The latest events in Nepal, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister, events which other members have mentioned, have caused a great deal of concern to my delegation, especially as they could potentially derail the peace process, which has, until now, made significant progress. We call on all parties to remain calm and seek to address the contentious issues through dialogue.

While it is very important to resolve the misunderstandings at the earliest opportunity, a lasting solution will have to be reached in the framework of the ongoing constitutional process. In this regard, we welcome the progress made thus far in the constitution-making process and trust that the Constituent Assembly will be able to reconcile the views presented by the various parties, especially on the form of government. The National Security Council, mandated with the responsibility of making recommendations on the mobilization, operation and use of the Nepal Army as part of the process of strengthening civilian control over that Army, will also have to expedite its work.

We are convinced that, as the peace process moves forward, it is imperative to adequately focus on the proper integration of the Maoist army into the Nepal Army as a way of ensuring lasting peace. We urge the relevant authorities to address this matter as soon as possible. We welcome the formation of the Technical Committee, which has already taken up its function of supporting the Special Committee in drawing up a work plan for completing the integration and rehabilitation of verified Maoist army personnel.

Finally, we express our appreciation to the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) for its contribution to the stability of Nepal, especially in its support for the peace process. Given the current political situation, UNMIN's role and its support for the Nepalese authorities in dealing with the immediate aftermath of the Prime Minister's resignation will be very important. We trust that, with the dedicated leadership of Ms. Landgren, the situation will be stabilized and the parties will move the process forward to its logical conclusion, which is the attainment of lasting peace and sustainable development in Nepal.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month and to thank Ambassador Heller and his team for their excellent presidency during the month of April. I also thank Ms. Landgren for her briefing and in particular for the information that she provided on recent developments in Nepal.

Those developments are worrisome. The current crisis between the Government and the Army, which has led to the resignation of Prime Minister Prachanda, is a subject of concern, and the risk posed to the entire peace process is not negligible. This is even more regrettable because we had recently seen some limited but real progress in the peace process — progress referred to in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/221). In that context, we believe that it is even more important that the Security Council send a signal to the Nepalese parties calling on them for compromise and cooperation to move the peace process forward. In that connection, we support the draft presidential statement submitted by the delegation of the United Kingdom.

We have taken note of the official Nepalese statements that the conditions are right for the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to complete its mandate in June. We wish that that were so, but it seems a bit unrealistic to us, given the progress in the process of demobilizing Maoist ex-combatants and the current political crisis. Thus, the Nepalese parties should be aware that UNMIN will not remain in Nepal forever. Those parties have requested United Nations support for the peace process, but they must shoulder their responsibility to move the process forward, in particular with regard to the reintegration of Maoist ex-combatants.

We continue to hope that the Government's commitment to finally release the minors held in Maoist camps will become a reality as soon as possible. The obstruction of that situation cannot be tolerated, as a solution should be technically feasible in the near future.

Finally, we remain prepared to support maintaining a lighter United Nations presence to support the peace process, in one way or another, if the Nepalese Government considers it useful.

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to join preceding speakers in

congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. You can be assured of the cooperation of my delegation. I also wish to commend Ambassador Heller of Mexico and the entire Mexican delegation for the excellent leadership shown during their presidency in April. In addition, we welcome Ms. Landgren and thank her for her briefing and for the efforts of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and a group of countries on behalf of Nepal.

We are closely following the situation in Nepal. We hope that recent events will not undermine the peace process in that country, especially since the peace process has been going through a critical phase requiring the cooperation of all parties to achieve reconciliation, unification and the implementation of the peace agreements and all other agreements reached, so that the people of Nepal can enjoy peace, stability and prosperity.

We were pleased to note Nepal's progress in the peace process, particularly with regard to a constitution and the future of the Nepal Army and the Maoist army. We hope that that progress will continue, so that the people of Nepal can draft a constitution guaranteeing the rights of all citizens, including those who have traditionally been marginalized. That would lend momentum to the peace process and help to bring about lasting stability in the country.

We welcome the resumption of the work of the Special Committee aimed at the reintegration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel, as well as the steps taken by the Government to demobilize them at various cantonment sites. We hope that those efforts will result in demobilization, especially for minors, and will help to bring about successful rehabilitation and reintegration within the desired time frame.

Despite all that has been accomplished, we remain concerned at the differences existing among the various political parties with regard to the current crisis, the murders, the abductions and the security problems, as well as the refusal of a number of groups to participate in dialogue. Thus, we call on all political parties and other relevant actors to work together to establish a dialogue and respect State institutions, striving to achieve compliance with the peace agreements, to strengthen the rule of law, to improve the security situation and to address impunity, taking into account the needs of marginalized groups. We believe that those are the prerequisites for the peace process.

Finally, we agree with the Secretary-General that, if the current political challenges continue, they will fray relations among various groups, to the detriment of compliance with the peace agreements and the peace process. Therefore, all political groups must work together to coordinate the peace process and to re-establish trust and a spirit of national unity and common policies.

Mr. Skračić (Croatia): My delegation would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We express our appreciation to Ambassador Heller and his team for the excellent work done during the previous month.

At the outset, Croatia would like to express its gratitude to Ms. Landgren for her comprehensive briefing updating us as to the situation on the ground, especially in light of the most recent, alarming events that have taken place in Nepal. Croatia joins others in expressing its deep concern over the current political turmoil in Nepal generated by months of continuing divisions and tensions among key political parties, which have continued to seriously impede the consolidation of peace. It is especially worrying that they have been allowed to culminate in the destabilization of the coalition Government and the paralysis of Nepal's fledgling democracy following the resignation of the Prime Minister over the controversial sacking and reinstatement of Nepal's Army chief.

The disturbing turn of events over the past few days has only served as a stark reminder that Nepal's troubles are far from over and that Nepal's peace process is facing its most severe test to date. In order to prevent any immediate collapse of the fragile architecture of the peace process, we call upon all sides to exercise full restraint and to avoid political or military retaliation, emphasizing the need to resolve the current crisis through dialogue and consensus with complete respect for the Constitution.

Following the current political impasse, we urge all parties to remain loyal to the commitment to the Nepalese people by re-establishing a consensus among all political parties, based on a genuine political dialogue aimed at completing the political process, underpinned by an inclusive State with full regard for human rights, and at ending impunity, so as to ensure

the Nepalese people a durable democratic and prosperous future.

We are encouraged by reported assurances by some political parties of their commitment to the peace process despite the current situation. To that end, we urge all political stakeholders to resume the progress made to date in the important process of building a constitution and to seriously address the remaining and difficult issue of supervision, integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants through the effective working of the Special Committee and specially mandated Technical Committee, and we urge the Government to implement its commitment to discharge minors from cantonments sites, all of whose ultimate success is central to lasting peace in Nepal.

Given the immense fragility of the current political situation, we support a clear and unanimous message from the Council that takes note of the problem. We further call on the Government to fulfill its assurances to the international community by continuing to take the necessary steps to create conducive conditions for the completion of the work of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), while recognizing the importance of maintaining international engagement in and in support of Nepal's peace process.

Finally, we would also like to express our deep appreciation and our full support for the important work of the Representative of the Secretary-General and her team in UNMIN under increasingly complex circumstances, as well as for the country team and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

We are grateful to the Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Karin Landgren, for submitting the report on the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) (S/2009/221) and for briefing us on recent developments in that country. We support the efforts of Ms. Landgren. We are pleased that the report welcomes the progress achieved in key areas of the Nepalese peace process. A serious discussion of developing a draft constitution and determining the future of the two armies has begun. The Special Committee on the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel has started regular consultations. A Constitutional Council and a National Security Council have been formed and have begun to establish local peace committees.

At the same time, we regret that, against that positive backdrop, in recent days negative trends have emerged in Nepal that are threatening the peace process. In the current situation, it is essential that all political forces in the country do their utmost to promptly resolve by consensus existing disputes on the basis of a political dialogue. We are confident that UNMIN, within its mandate, will provide the necessary support to the Nepalese for them to promptly overcome their problems. We will follow developments in that country.

I now resume my functions as president of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Paudel (Nepal): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you and the members of the Council for providing this opportunity to share our views in this meeting. I also congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month.

We appreciate the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/221) on United Nations support to the peace process. We would like to thank Ms. Karin Landgren, Representative of the Secretary-General, for her insightful briefing to the Council and we appreciate the role of the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) in our peace process under her able leadership. We have taken note of the views expressed by Council members and we appreciate their contribution. We also appreciate the pledges of support to the Government and people of Nepal for the success of the peace process.

We have witnessed Nepal's historic transformation process moving forward with many ebbs and flows since the signing of the peace agreement. We are confident that the peace process will not drift from its progressive and steady course, since the political forces of Nepal are resilient and accommodative in nature. We believe that the flexible attitude of the political parties will guide them towards the logical conclusion of the peace process.

We are also confident that current situation in Nepal will be resolved soon through dialogue and consensus among the political parties in the

Constituent Assembly. It will in no way jeopardize the peace process.

I would like to reiterate before this Council once again that the political parties, despite their differences, are engaged in dialogue to forge consensus in the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Constituent Assembly has been working vigorously on drafting a constitution. The Nepalese people are eager to see how their concerns and voices will be reflected in the new constitution-making process, once the Constituent Assembly puts forward a draft constitution for a final round of consultations among the people.

Similarly, the Special Committee on army integration and its Technical Committee are at work. Preparations to discharge the minors are making significant progress with the help of UNMIN and other United Nations agencies. We are determined to carry out our obligations in that regard.

We believe that the Council fully understands the throes of Nepal's historic transformation and that it stands by our side as a gesture of international support that will revitalize our efforts in the peace process. I would like to assure the Council that the Government of Nepal will make every sincere effort to allow UNMIN to complete its given activities by the end of its current mandate.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Ms. Landgren to reply to comments, observations and questions.

Ms. Landgren: First of all, Mr. President, let me thank you and other members of the Council for your kind words welcoming me to the Council and to United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and for your appreciation for the work of my colleagues in UNMIN and in the Department of Political Affairs on the report (S/2009/221) before you. We have noted your comments regarding the next Secretary-General's report.

The concerns of the present moment are indeed acute, and the Security Council's attention to and support for the challenges of Nepal's democratic transition is extremely important. Let me take as a starting point the question of what can be done, especially by UNMIN. UNMIN will act within the scope of its mandate and, as the Council knows, that is a limited mandate, but we will build on our contacts and on our strong dialogue with all political parties and the armies, as we have, I believe, what is acknowledged as an impartial role in the peace process.

The immediate challenge will be the formation of a Government and progress in the elected Legislature-Parliament, without spoiling the process and inserting unconscionable delays into the procedure. There will be great temptations for that at this moment, and all parties will need to exercise restraint and show respect for the democratic process to which they have committed.

There will be a need for a continuing technical role in respect of integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army personnel. UNMIN is working very closely with the committees to provide them and the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction with the support that they need and request. However, I want to underline that the resolution of that issue is not primarily a technical matter. It will be a difficult political negotiation. Nonetheless, we will support the committees, which are expected to present detailed and realistic proposals, on the basis of which the political discussions can take place.

The frustration among Maoist personnel is high at this stage, their having been in cantonments now for over two years, and it is essential that those discussions move forward. In the current context, the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) becomes a particularly important mechanism, as in that forum, the Nepal Army and Maoist army come together under the chairmanship of UNMIN. Through all the rough patches of this peace process — and, as the Council knows, this is not the first — the JMCC has continued to meet and discuss; it has continued to bring together the Nepal Army and the Maoist army for discussions in a professional and civilized atmosphere. Now more than ever, I would suggest, this becomes an important dialogue forum for the armies.

With regard to the discharge of minors, I see a risk that, at this moment, this could become a low priority politically. UNMIN will continue with the United Nations partners to help move this forward without further delay.

The focus has been very much on security issues centring on the Nepal Army and the Maoist army. It is essential that the process be highly attentive to the rights and interests of various other identity-based groups. Clearly, the overriding national priority is the drafting of the new constitution, and that requires not

only consensus at the level of the political parties, but also a sense of ownership on the part of all groups — the sense that they too have a place in the new Nepal, without recourse to violence. We have seen several incidents of violence and boycott over the past several months. That means maintaining an ongoing and inclusive dialogue with the traditionally marginalized parties and groups.

As experts point out, Nepal is a country of minorities. The largest group accounts for some 16 per cent of the population, so unity is the only answer and dialogue is the only satisfactory way to move forward. UNMIN — given our mandate — is not directly involved in that, but there is a need to continue to draw attention to it, and we will do so.

I would like to mention that with the recent turbulent events, the National Development Forum which was scheduled for next week has been postponed. That Forum, which was bringing together high-level representation of multilateral and bilateral donors, has been an integral part of developing Nepal's new national development strategy. It is unfortunate that the Forum had to be delayed and we hope that it will come swiftly back on track.

In closing, I would like to again state my appreciation for the Council's close attention to the report and to the situation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Landgren for her clarifications.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its concern about the current political crisis in Nepal, and underscores the urgent need for the Government of Nepal and all political parties to continue to work together in the spirit of compromise. The Council notes the steps taken so far in the implementation of the peace process and recalls its full support for that process.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and recalls resolution 1864 (2009) calling upon the Government of Nepal to continue to take the necessary decisions to create conditions conducive to completion of UNMIN's activities by the end of the current mandate, including through the work of the Special and Technical Committees for supervision, integration and rehabilitation of Maoist army combatants.

"The Security Council recalls the Government of Nepal's commitment to discharge minors from the cantonment sites and calls upon the Government of Nepal to implement that commitment in accordance with international law."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/12.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6120

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6120th meeting

Thursday, 7 May 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Long Zhou
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Ninth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2009/218)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-32887 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Ninth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2009/218)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Lebanon, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Roed-Larsen to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/218, which contains the ninth semi-annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolu 1559 (2004). I now give the floor to Mr. Roed-Larse

Mr. Roed-Larsen: I have the honour today present the ninth semi-annual report of the Secret General on the implementation of Security Cou resolution 1559 (2004).

One year ago, Lebanon was taken to the brink civil war and back. The violence that erupted on 7 M 2008 was one of the greatest threats to the foundations of the Lebanese State. A year has pas since the adoption, on 21 May 2008, of the agreem between Lebanese political leaders, brokered by Emir of Qatar at Doha with the support of the Lea of Arab States. Ever since, Lebanon's dome political and security situation has improved marked

Fortunately, the commitments made at Doha h been either implemented or meaningfully acted up Political divisions between the 14 March majority 8 March opposition have not led to paralysis, altho there have been occasional tensions. President Mic Sleiman has worked tirelessly to forge national un The general improvement of the situation in country, combined with reconciliation efforts in region, has created a favourable environment strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty, polit independence and government control throughout country.

In this context, I am glad to report today further strides towards the full implementation of requirements of resolution 1559 (2004).

The momentum created by the summit meet held in Damascus in August 2008 between Preside Bashar Al-Assad and Michel Sleiman has continued bear positive results. On 20 December, the Leban Council of Ministers appointed Michel Khoury Lebanon's first ambassador to Syria. On 22 Decemb Syria's embassy in Beirut became operational. 16 March 2009, the embassy of Lebanon in Damas was inaugurated. On 24 March 2009, Presid Sleiman approved the appointment of Ali Abdel Kar Ali as Syria's first ambassador to Lebanon. 20 April, Michel Khoury arrived in Damascus to ta up his post. This very morning, he presented credentials to President Bashar Al-Assad. With th recent steps, Syria and Lebanon have nearly comple the process leading to the establishment of f diplomatic relations between the two neighbouri countries, in fulfilment of resolution 1680 (2006).

The Secretary-General has maintained his efforts to encourage Syria and Lebanon to achieve the full delineation of their common border. In Doha this past March, Presidents Al-Assad and Sleiman informed the Secretary-General separately that the joint border committee would convene rapidly to start its work on the delineation of the borders, pursuant to the agreement reached in Damascus between the two Presidents on 13 and 14 August 2008. On 23 December 2008, President Sleiman issued a presidential decree naming the Lebanese members of the Lebanese-Syrian border committee tasked with delineating their common border. The United Nations is looking forward to the appointment by Syria of its delegates to the committee. The Secretary-General welcomes the renewed commitment of Syria and Lebanon to make progress on this matter and expects its early materialization. Tangible progress on the demarcation of the border is important and will benefit both countries.

The Secretary-General is glad that relations between the two historically close neighbours have improved significantly and have entered a new phase, particularly with the establishment of diplomatic relations. The Secretary-General has applauded Presidents Al-Assad of Syria and Sleiman of Lebanon for the leadership they have been demonstrating. He welcomes the renewed commitment by the Government of Syria, as conveyed in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Syria to the Secretary-General dated 4 May 2009 (S/2009/227), to preserve the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon, as called for in resolution 1559 (2004). The United Nations is hopeful that all these recent achievements herald a new era of renewed cooperation between the two countries, in mutual respect for their sovereignty and political independence.

During the reporting period, diplomatic efforts in relation to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area have been continuing. A further report on this will be contained in the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Over the past six months, Israel continued to occupy the northern part of Ghajar in violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Secretary-General has urged his Israeli interlocutors again over the past few weeks to find an early solution to this matter.

Intrusions into Lebanese airspace by Israeli aircraft have continued in high numbers, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and Security Council resolutions. The Government of Lebanon continued to protest these overflights, which the Government of Israel claim are carried out for security reasons. The United Nations has repeatedly deplored these violations and called on Israel to cease these overflights.

Over the past few weeks, the Lebanese authorities have arrested a series of individuals on suspicion of spying for Israel. The investigation is ongoing. On 4 May 2009, Prime Minister Siniora publicly addressed the matter and described it as a serious violation of Lebanon's sovereignty. The Prime Minister also indicated that he had requested his Foreign Minister to provide full information about these alleged spy networks to the United Nations. At this stage, the Secretariat has not yet received any official communication from the Government of Lebanon concerning this matter. If these allegations prove to be true, they would constitute indeed a serious violation of Lebanon's sovereignty.

Allow me now to move on to the provision of the resolution calling for the disarming and disbanding of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias. The disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias is vital for the complete consolidation of Lebanon as a sovereign and democratic State. Over the reporting period, there has been no tangible progress towards the disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, as called for by the Taif Accords and resolution 1559 (2004).

The threat that armed groups and militias pose to the sovereignty and stability of the Lebanese State cannot be overstated, as the events in May 2008 demonstrated. It creates an atmosphere of intimidation in the context of the upcoming parliamentary elections. It also undermines the stability of the region and is incompatible with the objectives of resolution 1559 (2004), which aims at strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence.

There are alarming reports of a large number of arms in Lebanon, held by groups across Lebanon's political spectrum. During the reporting period, Hizbullah's leadership has continued to assert that it has acquired more sophisticated military technology. The United Nations takes those reports seriously, but

does not have the means to independently verify them. In addition, we remain concerned by the porous nature of Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic and the continuing potential for breaches of the arms embargo. While the most recent deployment of Syrian troops along the northern Lebanese border — in coordination with the Lebanese army — is a positive step, further operational coordination between Syria and Lebanon will be required to enhance border control. In that context, it is noteworthy that the Government of Syria has denied any involvement in any illegal transfer of weapons across its border with Lebanon.

As the Council is aware, the most significant remaining Lebanese militia is the armed component of Hizbullah. In addition, several Palestinian militias operate in the country, inside and outside refugee camps.

We are concerned by security incidents in and around Palestinian camps. Some refugee camps provide safe haven for those who seek to escape the authority of the State. They constitute a reminder of the grave threat that armed groups pose to the stability and sovereignty of Lebanon, underscoring the urgency to disarm them. Security coordination and cooperation between the Lebanese security agencies and the Palestinian factions have improved, and should be further encouraged. More needs to be done to contain violence, which could potentially spill over into surrounding areas.

During the reporting period, the issue of Palestinian arms outside Lebanon's 12 official refugee camps has been discussed again within the National Dialogue. Those military installations are being illegally maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifadah. There are four such military bases located along the Lebanese-Syrian border, which give those militias de facto control of parts of the land border. There is also a fifth such installation, south of Beirut. While Lebanon's 14 key political leaders achieved agreement in the 2006 National Dialogue that those Palestinian armed positions had to be dismantled within six months, no progress has been achieved. At the last session of the National Dialogue, held on 28 April, Lebanese political leaders reiterated the necessity to implement previous decisions by the National Dialogue. The time has come to implement that important decision.

The Secretary-General has called upon the Lebanese authorities to take the necessary measures, consistent with the decisions of the National Dialogue, to dismantle the paramilitary infrastructures outside refugee camps. While he is keenly aware that that matter falls primarily under the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities, he recalls that that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifadah are both headquartered in Damascus. Therefore, cooperation between the Governments of Syria and Lebanon will be important in addressing this matter in the best interest of regional stability.

Hizbullah continues to maintain a significant paramilitary capacity and infrastructure separate from the State, in violation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). That arsenal is a direct challenge to the sovereignty of the Lebanese State and a threat to regional stability.

Over the past few weeks, there has been a growing concern that Hizbullah has engaged in clandestine and illegal militant activities beyond Lebanese territory. Indeed, on 8 April, the General Prosecutor of Egypt announced that 49 people had been arrested based on information from State security investigations. According to the General Prosecutor, they have allegedly been part of a cell assigned by Hizbullah "to plan and carry out hostile operations on Egyptian soil". On 10 April, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, publicly acknowledged that Egyptian authorities had detained a Hizbullah operative for attempting to provide logistical and military assistance to Gaza-based militants.

On 26 April 2009, I met in Cairo with the President of Egypt and his Foreign Minister. They shared with me preliminary elements of the investigation into the cell and requested that I convey them to the Secretary-General. Pursuant to that visit, the Foreign Minister of Egypt held a telephone conversation with the Secretary-General in which he indicated that the Government of Egypt would keep the United Nations abreast of the results of the ongoing investigation.

In a recent correspondence, the Government of Egypt informed the Secretary-General that, a cell led by a Lebanese member of Hizbullah had been uncovered during 2008. Using a real passport with a false identity, the Hizbullah operative had visited

Egypt over several years, where he recruited members for the network. The Government of Egypt has shared with the Secretary-General a number of details concerning the plans, resources and actions of the cell, as well as about the materials and devices confiscated.

In a televised speech on 29 April, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, rejected the accusations made by the Egyptian authorities that the organization was aiming to destabilize the country. The Government of Egypt informed the United Nations that the issue was now in the hands of the judiciary authorities of Egypt.

The Secretary-General's report on resolution 1559 (2004) has expressed concern about the statements made by Hizbullah leaders and has condemned such unwarranted interference in the domestic affairs of a Member State. Equally alarming is the fact that Hizbullah has publicly admitted to providing support to Gaza-based militants from Egyptian territory. Those activities exceed Hizbullah's stated national agenda.

The issue of Hizbullah's weapons continues to be central to the political debate in Lebanon. The Secretary-General reiterates his conviction that the disarming and disbanding of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias should take place through an inclusive political dialogue that addresses the political interests of all Lebanese. It should ultimately confirm the sole political and military authority of the Government of Lebanon. Hizbullah should therefore cease any militant activities outside of Lebanon and complete its transformation into a solely Lebanese political party, consistent with the requirements of the Taif Agreement. Regional parties, particularly those that maintain close ties with Hizbullah, must encourage it in the same direction.

We are pleased that the National Dialogue, under the auspices of the President of the Republic, has continued to convene on a quasi-monthly basis to develop a national defence strategy, which should consider ways to enhance the authority of the State. The last session was held on 28 April. In previous sessions, the participants committed themselves, inter alia, to work to guarantee a political and security climate favourable to the peaceful conduct of the Parliamentary election, devoid of violence and with calm electoral rhetoric. It was also agreed that experts would continue to seek to develop a national defence strategy. The next session will convene on 1 June.

The Dialogue touches upon fundamental issues that will affect Lebanon's future and character as a State well beyond the immediate horizon. However, while recognizing the merits of the process, the overall gains of the National Dialogue remain limited at this stage. All Lebanese leaders must approach this process in a spirit of cooperation and exert every effort towards a positive and concrete outcome that formalizes the Government of Lebanon's monopoly over the use of force within Lebanon's boundaries and results in progress towards the disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, consistent with Security Council resolutions and the Taif Agreement. That is also essential for the stability of the region. We remain mindful of the regional ramifications of this issue, and therefore call on all parties, inside and outside of Lebanon, to halt immediately all efforts to transfer and acquire weapons and build para-military capacities outside the authority of the State.

The United Nations would like to pay tribute to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), which play a crucial role in strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty and control over the whole country, thereby promoting stability in Lebanon and beyond. The multiple security responsibilities of the LAF, compounded by the fact that it lacks adequate military equipment, have an impact on its capacity to meet its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions. I therefore call on donor countries to continue to come forward and assist the LAF to improve its logistical and operational capabilities.

In sum, I recall that since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004) in September 2004, several of its provisions have now been implemented. Presidential elections took place in May 2008. Syria withdrew its troops and military assets from Lebanon in April 2005. Lebanon and Syria have established diplomatic relations and engaged in high-level talks on matters of relevance to Lebanon's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, such as the delineation of an international boundary between the two countries, as strongly encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution 1680 (2006).

However, we remain concerned by the occasional security incidents during the reporting period, some of which have led to casualties. These occurrences

highlight the proliferation of weapons and armed groups that continue to operate in Lebanon and whose existence is an ongoing violation of resolution 1559 (2004). These are direct threats to the stability of the country and the region as a whole. The threats posed by the existence of militias outside the control of the State render valid the remaining provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) as they relate to the disarmament of all armed groups and the extension of the Government's control throughout the country. The disbanding and disarming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias is a necessary element to the complete consolidation of Lebanon as a sovereign and democratic State.

The upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for 7 June 2009 will constitute a new milestone in the momentous transition that Lebanon has undertaken since the adoption of resolution 1559 (2004). It is indeed heartening that the Lebanese leaders have committed themselves to free and fair elections void of violence and inflammatory rhetoric. It is indeed essential that the parties continue to adhere to the Doha Accord, including the commitment to refrain from the use of weapons to settle internal political disputes. The leaders of Lebanon must think first and foremost about the future of their country and transcend sectarian and individual interests. On 7 June, the Lebanese people will have a unique opportunity to express their genuine commitment to democracy.

It is a clear imperative that Lebanon preserve its comprehensive political framework of coexistence as set out in the Taif Agreement in an atmosphere free from intimidation.

The Secretary-General calls on all parties and all actors to fully abide by resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). He will continue his efforts for the purpose of achieving full implementation of these and all other relevant Security Council resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his briefing.

I have no more speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6121

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6121st meeting

Friday, 8 May 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/232)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-33090 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/232)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representatives of Chad and the Sudan, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Allam-mi (Chad) and Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Dmitry Titov, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Titov to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, contained in document S/2009/232.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Dmitry Titov, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. I now give the floor to Mr. Titov.

Mr. Titov: Members of the Council may recall that in the briefing by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Council on 24 April (see S/PV.6111), we called attention to a significant build-up of the Chadian National Armed Forces in eastern Chad, both in personnel and in equipment, apparently in anticipation of a rebel incursion. At that time, we noted reports of a parallel build-up of Chadian armed opposition groups across the border in West Darfur, in the area of El Geneina. While this was cause for serious concern, this build-up did not, until recently, result in any significant clashes or cross-border incursions by the armed opposition groups.

To the extent possible, the United Nations undertook to deploy much-needed additional United Nations troops more rapidly to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) in the eastern part of the country, to enable it to deliver on its protection mandate. As Council members are aware, the mandate authorizes the United Nations to protect civilians in danger, facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid and movement of humanitarian personnel and protect United Nations personnel and facilities.

On 26 April, we began receiving unconfirmed reports, including through MINURCAT, of minor skirmishes between the Chadian security forces and small groups of rebels of the Union des forces de la résistance (UFR) in eastern Chad. Subsequently, we received unconfirmed reports of air strikes conducted on 1 and 2 May by the Chadian National Armed Forces on rebel positions. This was occurring in the vicinity of the border with the Sudan. In a statement dated 4 May, the Secretary-General expressed his serious concern over the build-up and movement of army and rebel forces and called on the Governments of Chad and the Sudan to make every effort to immediately ease tensions.

On 5 May, MINURCAT was able to confirm that the Chadian National Armed Forces were conducting air strikes, using jet fighters and attack helicopters, against a rebel column in eastern Chad in the area south of Goz Beida. Reports indicated the existence of three main rebel columns: two had moved into eastern Chad, while the third reportedly remained in a static position across the border. Reports on the actual sizes

of the columns vary, but each column is believed to number anywhere between 50 and 100 vehicles.

Regrettably, the situation intensified, and on 6 May the Secretary-General was compelled to express his increasing concern and to call for respect of the humanitarian character of United Nations operations and the operations of our non-governmental partners in eastern Chad.

On 6 and 7 May, we continued to receive reports from MINURCAT on air strikes targeting the rebel column, which was apparently located in a corridor extending from Goz Beida to Koukou Angarana and Kerfi in eastern Chad. These air strikes have reportedly resulted in heavy rebel losses. The extent of these losses, however, is difficult to assess at present. No assessment is available on the extent of losses by the Chadian army either.

Yesterday, we received reports of very heavy ground engagement between the Chadian army and UFR rebels in the vicinity of Am Dam, north of Goz Beida in eastern Chad, which is believed to be a pivotal area for any further progress towards the towns of Abéché and N'Djamena. According to today's report, heavy fighting in this area continues and unconfirmed reports received from the Chadian armed forces indicate that the Front is claiming 125 rebels and soldiers killed and over 150 rebels taken prisoner.

Meanwhile, the second rebel column is reported to have moved southward to the area of Tissi, near the border with the Central African Republic, and it has since moved westward towards Am Timan. We have no confirmed reports that this column has engaged in fighting yet.

The deteriorating security situation in eastern Chad has prompted humanitarian actors, including three United Nations agencies and 11 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to relocate their non-essential staff from Koukou Angarana to Goz Beida as a precautionary measure. In addition, some international NGOs have decided to relocate their staff from areas such as Ade and Abéché. At the request of the Détachement intégré de sécurité (DIS) command, MINURCAT has also assisted in the relocation of 25 of their officers in the area. In total, our Mission assisted in relocating almost 100 various international and national staff, who are currently under the protection of the MINURCAT contingent.

The head of MINURCAT, Mr. Victor Angelo, visited Goz Beida two days ago to personally take stock of the situation in town and to reassure the United Nations and NGO staff as to the determination and capability of MINURCAT to protect them. Also, two days ago, the United Nations suspended all its activities in several regions of eastern Chad, owing to movement of armed opposition groups in those areas.

Thus far, no significant population displacements have been reported as a result of fighting. The confrontation, however, has gravely compromised the ability of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and their NGO partners to deliver humanitarian assistance.

On 3 May in Doha, under the auspices of the Governments of Qatar and Libya, the Governments of Chad and the Sudan signed a new bilateral agreement to normalize relations and deny any support, in their respective territories, to rebel groups that are hostile to either of them. Only two days later, on 5 May, a spokesman of the Government of Chad accused the Government of the Sudan of sending armed elements into eastern Chad and thus breaching the Doha agreement. A spokesman of the Government of the Sudan has denied this accusation, noting that his country remained committed to the Doha agreement.

It is essential, therefore, that both Governments act upon the Doha agreement and past commitments to prevent further rebel incursions from either side of the border. It is also essential that armed opposition groups realize that efforts to seize power through force are unacceptable. In that regard, the current presence of representatives of the Justice and Equality Movement in Doha for meetings with representatives of the Government of the Sudan is an encouraging development from our point of view.

At the same time, as the rainy season is beginning, it is critically important that the humanitarian community be able to pre-position essential humanitarian supplies and materials, especially in the communities that become isolated due to flooded and impassable roads. Should the current situation worsen, it could potentially jeopardize that very important humanitarian work.

As of today, the MINURCAT force stands at 2,396 personnel, which represents 46 per cent of its authorized strength. The force lacks 14 of the 18 military utility and reconnaissance helicopters called

for in the concept of operations for the Mission. It has yet to achieve the full deployment of the Ghanaian battalion, and will not commence deployment of the Nepalese battalion as an operational reserve, based in Abéché, until June, based on that unit's readiness to move.

As a result, the United Nations military force lacks the ability to observe and track incidents as they develop, as well as a force reserve that possesses the necessary mobility to reinforce sites or to react to changing circumstances. We therefore urge the Council to join the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is appealing to potential troop contributors to provide MINURCAT with the required helicopter and other assets in order to enable it to fully deliver on its mandate. In the meantime, we commend the work of the United Nations uniformed and civilian personnel, who continue to serve in eastern Chad under extremely difficult conditions.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Titov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Allam-mi (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May. I would also like to welcome the Secretariat's report and to assure it that it has received our full attention.

I have come from Doha, where once again I was naive enough to hope that the Khartoum regime had decided to put an end to its aggression against my country and indeed to its subversive attempts to thwart our policy to consolidate the rule of law and democracy. For a moment, I actually hoped that it would be the end of those attempts to overthrow the legitimate institutions of the country and to install in N'Djamena an authority loyal to Khartoum — Khartoum, which thus hopes to benefit from the complicity of such an authority to continue with impunity its crimes against humanity in Darfur.

However, at the time of the press conference that followed the signing of the agreement, a slight doubt about Khartoum's good faith crossed my mind. Indeed, in answer to a question about the presence of subversive forces on Sudanese territory, the Sudanese Minister wanted it believed that the fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) were based in Chad, giving as an example the presence in N'Djamena of Mr. Khalil, the head of that movement. However, with the agreement of the Sudan, we facilitated a meeting between the envoy of a great country and Mr. Khalil of JEM. That envoy used his good offices for the resumption of the Doha inter-Sudanese talks, with a view to a ceasefire and a political settlement of the Darfur crisis. He managed to convince JEM to dispatch a delegation to Doha. Did we commit a crime by playing our role of facilitator?

Khartoum's attitude does not surprise us if we look at the past. Peace agreements have been signed at the level of heads of State — first in Tripoli, Libya, on 8 February 2006; in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 3 May 2007; and in Dhaka, Senegal, on 13 March 2008 — not to mention the many communiqués issued in the context of peace initiatives of the countries of the subregion or of the African Union under the auspices of our brother, Guide Muammar Al-Qadhafi. Once the meeting was over and the agreement signed, the ink hardly dry, whether immediately afterwards or a few days or weeks later, we were attacked by forces coming from the Sudan.

In short, if, despite all those agreements, the situation continues to worsen, it is because somewhere there is ill will and bad faith. One tends to say that it is the fault of both countries, which seems to us inaccurate. How can you put on an equal footing the one that started the war — the aggressor — and the one that is defending itself: the victim.

We are the victims of a Machiavellian machination of the Khartoum regime, whereas we have not stopped working for peace in Darfur. But Khartoum has unjustly accused us of being behind the rebellion in Darfur and has mounted a vast war machine to destabilize our country. The proof exists. We have proof that since the beginning of 2005, the Sudan has recruited, equipped and trained a subversive tribal force against Chad. These are Sudanese, Chadian and bi-national combatants whose only goal is to overthrow the legitimate institutions of the country. It made available to that force Toyota military vehicles, heavy weapons, equipment stockpiles, food, fuel and so on. And it has not stopped trying to unite all those tribal components into a common front and has made available to them several military training camps in Darfur.

Moreover, the Khartoum regime applauded the desertion of some elements of the Chadian National Armed Forces in October 2005 and the defection of some Chadian officers in December 2005. Those soldiers and officers were retrieved by Khartoum, which placed them at the head of its war machine to conceal its aggression as an intra-Chadian issue.

That subversive force became active on 26 September 2005, when it attacked the Chadian town Moudeina. Two major attacks were carried out on Adré on 18 December 2005. That double attack on Adré was followed by a huge offensive against several Chadian military garrisons in eastern Chad and a Sudanese refugee camp on Chadian territory. But the most spectacular attacks were those of 13 April 2006 and 2 February 2008 on N'Djamena, clearly revealing Khartoum's intention to overthrow State institutions.

With regard to what is occurring in the eastern part of my country, members will agree with me that I was right to tell them in my previous communications that the rule of law and democracy, which we intend to consolidate in Chad, necessarily depend on stability and peace in the country, and not the obscure strategies of the groups of armed mercenaries in the pay of the Sudan. They will agree that the establishment of a lasting peace in Chad depends also, and in particular, on the consolidation of the democratic rule of law in the country through effective implementation of the provisions of the 13 August 2007 political agreement sponsored by the international community. They will agree too that those who, as I said, are still today being unfairly called the armed opposition must renounce the use of force and return to the country, in accordance with the 25 October 2007 Sirte Agreement, instead of rejecting that Agreement on the pretext that it is obsolete, thus helping to consolidate the democratic rule of law, to which we want them to truly commit themselves by endorsing the 13 August 2007 political agreement. However, I also quite rightly emphasize that we should not dream too much, as we know that they are not free to choose that path, which is contrary to their masters' Machiavellian designs.

Despite the Doha agreement, their masters ordered them to enter Chad, and its army supports them in attacking Chad. Members will recall that I emphasized their presence in the Sudan and that, under the 25 October 2007 Sirte Agreement, they were supposed to be disarmed and regrouped where they were stationed. That is why, before the Council, we welcomed the Secretary-General's most recent report on this topic (S/2009/199), in which he stated in paragraph 13 that those indebted to Khartoum — our phrase — "continued to consolidate their forces in West Darfur near El Geneina". On the same occasion, I reaffirmed our commitment to comply with the provisions of all the peace agreements linking us to the Sudan: the Tripoli, Dakar and Riyadh Agreements. And I concluded by expressing to the Council our hope that the Chadian-Sudanese peace talks to be held in Doha, Qatar, would pave the way for a true normalization of our relations.

On 5 May, the Government of the Republic of Chad recalled that it had welcomed the signing of the Doha agreement on normalizing relations with the Sudan — the umpteenth agreement, as knowledgeable observers ironically stressed. Trusting in the commitment of the mediator countries and the expressed will to implement the provisions of all previous agreements, the Government of the Republic of Chad emphasized that it hoped that this time, there would truly be a return to peace and trust between the two countries.

Regrettably, the Chadian Government bitterly noted that the intentions and the strategy of the Khartoum regime had not changed and that, by signing the Doha Agreement, the Khartoum regime had acted with the same duplicity as with previous agreements. With the ink on the Doha Agreement not even dry, the Government of Chad denounced the aggressive posture of the Khartoum regime, which had launched several armed columns, equipped with 350 vehicles, against our country. They were defeated, but we do not exclude the possibility that Khartoum will repeat its aggression. The Chadian Government believes that, by unleashing that planned aggression against Chad, the Sudanese regime renounced the Doha agreement.

Through its statement, the Government of the Republic of Chad wishes to draw the international community's attention to the bad faith of the Khartoum regime and to ask that it take all necessary useful measures to help Chad protect its stability, its integrity and the safety of its beleaguered population. Therefore, I wish to state that, on my Government's instructions, I requested that the Security Council hold an urgent meeting to consider the new aggression committed by the Sudan against my country. I thank the Council for heeding our appeal and organizing this meeting.

It is no longer a secret to any Council member present here that the puppet force created, armed, equipped and led by Sudanese soldiers and reinforced by the notorious Janjaweed militia has constantly attacked my country. As I said, the Secretary-General's most recent report indicated the presence of that force near El Geneina, in the Sudan. The Chad-Sudan mediation cannot deny that, because it requested that the Doha meeting be delayed and held on 28 April instead of 7 April, as previously planned, to give the Sudanese Government time to fulfil its commitments under the 25 October Sirte Agreement by moving its puppets away from the border and disarming them. The Doha agreement also refers to the Sirte Agreement in its provision calling for the parties to comprehensively implement the agreements of which they have been witnesses and guarantors.

This new situation, which dangerously threatens peace and security in the subregion in general and in Chad in particular, deserves the urgent attention of the Council so that it can take all appropriate measures to put an end to the Sudan's repeated aggressions against my country, which needs the international community's support to protect its integrity, its stability and the security of its population. The Security Council must no longer tolerate the fact that thousands of men equipped with hundreds of vehicles are being mobilized by the Sudan in plain view of the entire world to attack my country. The Council must clearly condemn the Al-Bashir regime for its repeated acts of aggression over the years against my country, which has suffered too much from war and aspires to live in peace under the rule of law and democracy, even though that is not what Khartoum would prefer.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to express our satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council as the representative of a country that is well known for its full commitment to the firm principles guiding international relations and that has friendly relations with my own country. We have no doubt that, with your wisdom, you will lead the Council's deliberations to the success to which we all aspire. We also commend your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Mexico, for the skilful manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month. In addition, we thank the representative of the Secretariat for his valuable briefing today.

Once again, the Sudan was not surprised by the crocodile tears that Chad shed before the Security Council. We have never been surprised when Chad has rushed to accuse our country, which is not involved in the internal conflicts that have intensified between Chad and its opposition. That has become a consistent and well-known method of the Chadian Government. We have not been surprised at Chad's tendency to blame the Sudan — in ploys that no longer deceive anyone anywhere in the world — for its own failure to honour commitments under the agreements that it has signed with Chadian factions against the Sudan.

What is happening in Chad is an internal affair that the Sudan has nothing to do with. On several occasions, the Sudan has called for independent mechanisms to investigate Chadian allegations that were made to conceal Chad's domestic failures and to mask its plans for aggression against the Sudan.

Yet, as is well known, Chad continues to avoid meetings of the Contact Group stipulated in the Dakar Agreement, and member States of the Group can testify to that fact. A lack of political will on the part of the Chadian leadership to implement its agreements with the Sudan has become entirely clear to everyone.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that Chad has made a habit of covering its criminal activities on Sudanese territory by bringing complaint after complaint to the Security Council, and by multiplying its false accusations whenever it plans an act of aggression against our country.

There is abundant evidence. We recall the aggression carried out against Omdurman on 12 May 2008: a few days prior to the attack, Chad complained to the Security Council in order to pre-emptively cover it up. We assure the Council that these latest accusations against the Sudan are yet another obvious and clear manoeuvre to cover up intensive aggression that is taking place and that will be carried out by the Justice and Equality Movement from Chadian territory against positions and sites of a party to the Darfur Peace Agreement.

The Movement attacked the area of Forawiya on 5 May and took the area leader as prisoner, and on 6 May it attacked the area of Abu Kumbra. At this very moment, the Justice and Equality Movement, which is

supported by Chad, is conducting attacks on several areas east of Djebel Mara and around Djebel Moun, relying on major logistical support from the Government of Chad. This support takes the form of 200 Land Cruisers, 22 four-barrelled guns, 60 DShK guns, 150 Karnov machine guns and 20 oil tank trucks, in addition to other military support. Through this Chadian support, the Justice and Equality Movement has resumed its military activities in Darfur, having been compensated by the Government of Chad for the losses it incurred during its attack on Omdurman.

In clear violation of all relevant provisions of the agreements, the Government of Chad has facilitated the Justice and Equality Movement's entry into the refugee camps in eastern Chad, allowing it during the past few months to conduct conscription campaigns among the refugees and displaced persons. They have even recruited children and used them in their irresponsible adventures. Reports submitted to the Council by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs testify to that state of affairs.

Everyone has to recognize and admit that our neighbour Chad has complicated internal problems that predate the Darfur problem by decades, and for which a peaceful and comprehensive political settlement is needed. Avoiding the facts and levelling accusations against others will not help to bring about the peace and stability that we in the Sudan are eager to see as soon as possible, for we know that in the stability of Chad lies the stability of the Sudan as well.

Therefore, Chad's accusations that the Sudan is destabilizing Chad are without merit, as they are intended to cloak an act of aggression that is taking place now and to divert attention from the real problems of Chad. As members of the Council know, the Sudan is eager to bring about stability in Chad. Our initiatives and contributions are in no way transient: bringing about stability in our neighbouring State is our strategic goal, to which the Sudan has devoted considerable efforts over the decades, well before the problem of Darfur arose. The Government of Chad knows very well that the Sudan sought to achieve national reconciliation in Chad throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The Government of Chad also knows that, at the initiative of the Government of the Sudan and under its auspices, reconciliation between the Government of Chad and the opposition culminated in the signing of the N'Djamena Agreement of 14 May 1993 between the National Front of Chad led by Mr. Elharith and the Government of President Idriss Déby. The Government of Chad knows very well that the Sudan led a mediation initiative to address the problems that arose between Chadian President Idriss Déby and his former Defence Minister Abbas Koty. That mediation led to the conclusion of the Tripoli Agreement of 14 August 1993, under which the former Defence Minister returned to Chad. But Chad's record of eliminating all those who oppose it is well known to all.

Chad knows very well that the Sudan led the reconciliation efforts between President Idriss Déby and the National Reform Council group. That mediation culminated in the Reconciliation Agreement of 1995.

On 22 October 1997, Khartoum hosted the reconciliation meeting between the Government of Chad and four opposition factions, which culminated in the conclusion of the Khartoum Agreement between both sides and the return of the opposition parties to N'Djamena in a Sudanese aircraft accompanied by a high Sudanese official. The Government of Idriss Déby knows that in July 1999 the Sudan led reconciliation efforts between the Government of Chad and the National Movement for Democracy and Development led by Moussa Madela.

Those are only a few examples of the reconciliation agreements that were brought about through the initiative of the Sudan, and under its auspices before the Darfur problem arose. Yet some have claimed that the problems flowed from Darfur into Chad rather than acknowledging that Chad had its own chronic and difficult problems.

Regarding the agreement between Chad and the opposition groups, in which the Sudan has played a key role, we refer as an example to the participation of the President himself in the reconciliation and mediation effort that led to the conclusion of the Sirte Agreement between the Government of Chad and the main opposition factions on 25 October 2007, under the auspices of President Muammar Al-Qadhafi of Libya. Over the years, the Sudan has remained a constructive party in all the efforts, including bilateral and regional mediation initiatives, between President Idriss Déby and the Chadian opposition.

It is sad indeed that I am obliged to describe to the Council Chad's constant attempts to undermine the

agreements that have been reached and to which the Sudan remains unilaterally committed. Those agreements include the Tripoli Agreement of 8 February 2006, the Khartoum Framework Agreement of 28 August 2006, the Riyadh Agreement of 3 May 2007, the Dakar Agreement of 13 March 2008 and the recent Doha Agreement of 3 May 2009, on which we were negotiating just as the Government of Chad and the Justice and Equality Movement were preparing their criminal invasion, which is now under way and which Chad is attempting to conceal under a multitude of accusations against the Sudan.

We look forward to Chad turning its attention to the resolution of its own internal problems. We look forward to it ceasing its continued attempts to destabilize the Sudan and prolong the war in Darfur, using the Justice and Equality Movement to that end, and putting an end to its blatant allegations. The Sudan already has enough priorities and challenges to face, and it has nothing to gain by interfering in the internal affairs of any other country, let alone those of the Government of Chad. The Sudan attaches great importance to Chad and knows that it will be affected — negatively or positively — by anything that happens in Chad. In view of the kinship that links us with the tribes and all the people of Chad, we hope that the Government of Chad will have the courage to address its internal problems and fulfil its commitments in that regard.

Levelling accusations at the Sudan will not help Chad. The international community must recognize too that Chad has chronic problems that predate the Darfur issue. The Government of Chad must acknowledge the Sudan's good-offices efforts rather than making baseless accusations. It must show the political will to fulfil the aspirations of both peoples to a stable and safe environment, something to which my country is committed.

Chad's repeated recourse to the Security Council — with the well-known support of one member of the Council which seeks only to further its own strategic interests in the region — is not in the interest of Chad or its people and does not serve the stability of these two neighbourly States. Nor does it serve the credibility of the Security Council.

If it truly wishes to help the sister Republic of Chad, the Security Council must advise it first to seek reconciliation among its own people and not to ignore regional mechanisms such as the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States, which is making praiseworthy efforts to build peace in the region. The Security Council has been calling for a larger role for regional arrangements, and it should translate its words into deeds. It is strange indeed that Chad should rush to the Security Council in this way at the very time when the African Union Peace and Security Council is considering this matter.

I wish in conclusion to assure the Council that the Sudan is fully committed to the policy of good-neighbourliness and to implementing all agreements concluded between our two States, in the interests of peace and stability.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6122

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6122nd meeting

Friday, 8 May 2009, 5.05 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Long Zhou
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Kimura
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Turkey	Mr. Gümrükçü
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. Cowan
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/232)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-33234 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Letter dated 6 May 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/232)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): Pursuant to the invitation extended at the 6121st meeting, I invite the representative of Chad to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Allam-mi (Chad) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council condemns the renewed military incursions in eastern Chad of Chadian armed groups, coming from outside.

"The Security Council stresses that any attempt at destabilization of Chad by force is unacceptable. It recalls the terms of the declarations of its President dated 4 February 2008 (S/PRST/2008/3) and 16 June 2008 (S/PRST/2008/22). It reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and political independence of Chad. It demands that rebel armed groups cease violence immediately and calls on all parties to re-engage in dialogue in the framework of the Sirte agreement of 25 October 2007.

"The Security Council calls on Sudan and Chad to respect and fully implement their mutual commitments, in particular in the Doha Agreement of 3 May 2009 and the Dakar Agreement of 13 March 2008, and to engage constructively with the Dakar contact group and the good offices of Libya and Qatar, to normalize their relations, cooperate to put an end to cross-border activities of armed groups and strengthen actions to combat illicit arms trafficking in the region, including through the establishment of effective joint border monitoring. The Council expresses its concern at the external support received by Chadian armed groups, as reported by the Secretary-General.

"The Security Council expresses deep concern at the direct threat the activity of armed groups poses for the safety of the civilian population and the conduct of humanitarian operations. It reiterates its full support for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), which is mandated to contribute to protect vulnerable civilians including refugees and internally displaced persons, to protect United Nations and associated personnel and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council calls on all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular to respect the security of civilians, including women and children, humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel.

"The Security Council encourages the Chadian authorities in promoting political dialogue, with respect for the constitutional framework, as initiated in the Agreement of 13 August 2007."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/13.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6123

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6123rd meeting

Monday, 11 May 2009, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Spindelegger
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Yoda
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Costa Rica	Mr. Stagno Ugarte
	Croatia	Mr. Božinović
	France	Mr. Kouchner
	Japan	Mr. Ito
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. Davutoğlu
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Miliband
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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09-33303 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should now like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

First and foremost, I should like to express my gratitude to all my colleagues who have accepted our invitation to attend today's meeting. My special gratitude goes to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and other representatives who have come from their capitals, as well as, of course, to the Secretary-General for his personal participation in today's meeting.

The Security Council last met in today's format not long ago. In December 2008, the Council held a ministerial meeting at which it adopted resolution 1850 (2008), in which we unanimously expressed our understanding that progress towards the establishment of peace and stability should continue and that it should be comprehensive, cover all negotiating tracks, and be based on commonly accepted decisions and principles anchored in international law.

However, an alarming negotiating vacuum has arisen as a result of well-known causes, including the eruption of violence, the Gaza crisis at the beginning of the year and the elections and the extended time it took to form a new Government in Israel.

I believe that, in the current circumstances, the most important thing is the rapid resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. It is of primary importance that the political process not be relaunched from the baseline, but that it should benefit from the available decisions of the international community and the agreements and understandings already achieved between the sides.

That is why one of the most pressing tasks is to reaffirm the international legal basis for the settlement of the Palestinian question, first and foremost on the basis of the two-State principle, which will lead to an independent, viable Palestinian Government, living side by side in peace with Israel. Of special importance, we believe, is the support expressed for the Arab Peace Initiative at the recent League of Arab States summit held in Doha. Together with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), other relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Road Map, the Arab Peace Initiative has become an integral part of the basis for building a new Middle East — a Middle East in which there will be no place for occupation or terrorism, but in which mutually beneficial and respectful cooperation between sovereign States and equal peoples will prevail.

It is clear that the path towards this objective will be a difficult one. The focus of our attention should be the situation in the region. It is essential to achieve clear compliance by the Palestinians and Israelis with their commitment to fighting terrorism and violence and to avoiding any unilateral action to prejudice a final status settlement, including the cessation of settlement activities and ensuring freedom of movement for the Palestinian population in the West Bank.

A great deal will depend on the success of the inter-Palestinian dialogue. The relevant efforts by Egypt should, in our view, continue to enjoy the full support of the international community. The restoration of Palestinian unity on the basis of the platform of the Palestine Liberation Organization and adherence to the Arab Peace Initiative are the only keys to meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and to progress in the Middle East peace process on the basis of the proposals arrived at by the Quartet in the context of the United Nations.

In accordance with the aforementioned considerations, we have prepared a draft presidential statement, which we propose to adopt as an outcome document of today's meeting. I would like to thank all our colleagues, who have made substantial contributions to the agreed text. We, along with the entire international community, have the responsibility of ensuring the viability of the peace process, promoting its rapid resumption and ensuring that it is acceptable to all. Work towards this goal should not be hampered by emotions.

The next step in our common efforts will be the Moscow conference on the Middle East. There is broad

international consensus in favour of that forum, as enshrined in Security Council resolutions and the decisions of the Middle East Quartet. During the course of the preparation of practical aspects of the Moscow conference, we are of course taking into account the views of the main stakeholders — the Palestinian, Israeli, Syrian and Lebanese people. With their support, for which we are grateful, the date and substantive part of the Moscow forum have been agreed. The conference stands to make a substantial contribution to the overall settlement of the Palestinian question and to bringing peace, security and stability to all peoples and Governments of the Middle East.

I now resume my function as President of this Council.

I welcome His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to this meeting, and I give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: The Council meets at the outset of a very important few weeks for the cause of peace in the Middle East. In this regard, I welcome and appreciate the participation of many distinguished ministers in this meeting, and I appreciate the initiative of the Russian presidency.

After the inconclusive results of last year's negotiations and the bloodshed in Gaza, the past three months have witnessed almost no progress on the two key resolutions, resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), recently adopted by this Council. I hope that this meeting today will help provide direction and momentum.

In the period ahead, United States President Obama will host the Israeli and Palestinian leaders and key regional parties in Washington, D.C. I expect the Quartet to meet soon and to consult closely with members of the League of Arab States. The challenge is to begin implementing transformative changes on the ground and to kick-start a renewed and irreversible drive to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. The ultimate objective remains the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is fundamental to the well-being of both peoples, the region and the world. This Council, the Quartet, States in the region, the international community as a whole and I as Secretary-General must each play our full role. Security Council resolutions, previous agreements and obligations, and the Arab Peace Initiative give us the framework we need. We should be as determined as we are patient, as insistent as we are supportive, and as principled as we are empathetic to the very real concerns of both parties. The parties need confidence that the process will address their vital interests. For that, they need confidence that commitments made will be commitments monitored and commitments kept.

In this regard, I believe that there is a deep crisis of confidence among ordinary people on the ground, and for good reason. Palestinians continue to see unacceptable unilateral actions in East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank — house demolitions, intensified settlement activity, settler violence and oppressive movement restrictions due to permits, checkpoints and the barrier, which are intimately connected to settlements. The time has come for Israel to fundamentally change its policies in this regard, as it has repeatedly promised to do but has not yet done. Action on the ground, together with a genuine readiness to negotiate on all core issues, including Jerusalem, borders and refugees, based on Israel's existing commitments, will be the true tests of Israel's commitment to the two-State solution.

Ordinary Israelis continue to seek reassurance that a future Palestinian State will guarantee their right to live in peace and security. In this respect, indiscriminate rocket attacks that have caused loss of life, civilian suffering and damage to property in Israel are not only deeply unacceptable, but also totally counterproductive, and must cease. The Palestinian Authority must continue its efforts to consolidate progress in developing and deploying an effective security structure and the functioning institutions of a future State — work that Israel must facilitate. For its part, Israel should refrain from using excessive force that kills and injures civilians, as it did during the recent conflict in Gaza with such devastating consequences. Firm and full respect for international humanitarian law by all parties is indispensable.

The beginning of Palestinian self-empowerment has been a key achievement of this past year's efforts and must not be imperilled by the financial crisis facing the Palestinian Authority. I appeal to donors, including in the region, to urgently meet unfulfilled commitments, including for budget support and Gaza's reconstruction.

I remain extremely worried about the situation in and around Gaza, with internal Palestinian divisions and Israeli-Hamas tensions trapping the civilian population in a vortex of hopelessness. The United Nations continues to fully support Egypt's efforts to achieve reconciliation among Palestinian groups and is ready to engage with a Government that unites Gaza and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority. As an interim measure, we would also welcome the establishment of practical mechanisms that could help Palestinians in Gaza focus on reconstruction, security issues and preparations for elections.

I am convinced that the policy of continued closure of the Gaza Strip does not weaken Israel's adversaries in Gaza, but does untold damage to the fabric of civilian life. Nearly four months after the conflict, in which 3,800 houses and two health-care centres were destroyed, and 34,000 homes, 15 hospitals, 41 health-care centres and 282 schools sustained varying degrees of damage, we cannot get anything beyond food and medicine into Gaza to assist a population that had been in the midst of a war zone. This is completely unacceptable.

I call on Israel to respond positively to repeated calls to allow glass, cement and building materials into Gaza. In the aftermath of the war and given the level of human suffering now evident on the ground, I seek the support of all members of this Council and the Quartet for the United Nations efforts in Gaza. We are ready to work with local businessmen to help start action to repair and rebuild houses, schools and clinics. I can assure all Council members that we will continue to ensure the full integrity of programmes and projects.

Indeed, the provisions of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) — a durable and fully respected ceasefire, prevention of the illicit supply of weapons to Gaza, the reopening of the crossings in accordance with the Agreement on Movement and Access, and progress on Palestinian reconciliation under the legitimate Palestinian Authority — must be fulfilled. Efforts on these elements, as well as a prisoner exchange, remain the only way of meaningfully altering the dynamics on the ground for the better.

Finally, let me emphasize the important regional context. Arab countries have reaffirmed their commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative, which offers Israel the opportunity for acceptance and security within the region on the basis of land for peace. This remains a key framework around which a comprehensive approach to peace can and must be built. I continue to believe strongly in the potential for activating the regional tracks of the peace process, alongside a rejuvenated Palestinian track, including between Israel and Syria, on the basis of land for peace. I support the convening of an international conference in Moscow. I also look to Arab and regional countries to play a positive role regarding the internal Palestinian situation by urging all parties to turn away from violence and weapons acquisition and towards reunification under one Palestinian Authority committed to the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization and, indeed, to the Arab Peace Initiative itself.

Like a bicycle that falls over when left at a standstill, the situation on the ground could easily deteriorate unless proper direction is given and real momentum is quickly generated. Violence and terror will not bring the Palestinians statehood and dignity, and settlement expansion and closure will not bring Israel security or peace. And no two-State solution can be reached if the situation between Gaza and southern Israel continues on its present destructive course or if Palestinians remain permanently divided.

I call on the parties to honour all existing agreements and previous commitments and to pursue an irreversible effort towards the two-State solution, including by fully implementing commitments on the ground. I also believe that the international community's credibility is at stake. We are a long way from where we hoped to be when we embarked on a fresh push for peace less than two years ago. However, I take heart that there is a deep consensus about the scale of the challenge and the importance of meeting it. Let us move forward with confidence and resolve, knowing that, if we rise to our responsibilities, we will help the parties rise to theirs, too.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Spindelegger (Austria): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the developments on the ground, and Minister Lavrov for his initiative of bringing us together.

Four and a half months ago, with the tragic violent confrontation in and around the Gaza Strip ongoing, we met here facing an unprecedented challenge to the Middle East peace process. The Security Council adopted a resolution calling for an immediate and durable ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Even though a fragile ceasefire is in place today, we have seen no further progress at the political, security and economic levels. The parties and the international community are thus confronted with the urgent need to create the conditions for relaunching a credible and comprehensive peace process.

Our discussion is taking place at an important moment for the future of the region. The new Government of Israel is engaged in a strategic review of its approach towards it neighbours and the peace process. Palestinians have to face the challenge of bridging their deep internal rift, agree on unification and prepare for new elections in order to give new democratic legitimacy to their leadership.

In this period of uncertainty and transition, the international community must shoulder its responsibility and engage with the parties in order to move towards substantive negotiations for a lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. Therefore, the Security Council must reconfirm its steadfast support for the peace process and its basic parameters: durable peace and freedom from violence and terrorism based on a two-State solution, as required by the Road Map, with two democratic States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. I would like to thank the Russian presidency for preparing a statement that will, we hope, serve as a guideline to the parties for re-engaging in comprehensive negotiations on all tracks.

Three months ago, at the Gaza reconstruction conference, the international community pledged its full support for humanitarian relief to the civilian population and to early reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. The Secretary-General's report leaves no doubt that there is an unacceptable lack of progress in alleviating the dire living conditions in the Gaza Strip. While Austria supports coordinated action by all parties concerned to prevent the illegal flow of arms and ammunition into the Gaza Strip, we urgently call on Israel to allow for the immediate and comprehensive supply to the civilian population of the Gaza Strip of goods to satisfy everyday needs and the requirements of reconstruction. The Gaza Strip needs fuel, cash and materials to repair schools, clinics, sanitation networks and shelters.

With its European Union partners, Austria has contributed funds to be disbursed by the European Commission to socially vulnerable Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Under the current circumstances, that money simply cannot be disbursed to those whom we want to support. Innocent citizens must not be held hostage by Israel because of the irresponsible policies of an illegitimate political leadership in the Gaza Strip. Let me say this very clearly: the current policies imposed on the Gaza Strip deprive its people of their human dignity. That is not acceptable.

Rebuilding Gaza and moving forward on the path to peace also require rebuilding trust, including by strengthening respect for the rule of law, human rights and international humanitarian law. In that context, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for having provided us with a summary of the findings of the Board of Inquiry on a number of deeply disturbing incidents during the Gaza crisis. As a matter of principle, allegations of violations of international humanitarian law must be investigated, wherever they occur and whoever may have committed them. Austria believes that this report also merits follow-up by the Council.

We are concerned about the lack of political progress in the West Bank, where Israeli roadblocks and closure policies continue to render normal social life and economic activities impossible. Settlement construction and the destruction of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank undermine any meaningful peace talks and, in consequence, weaken the credibility of the political process and play into the hands of radical forces.

At the same time, we urgently call on Palestinian political representatives to assume their responsibility and to seriously engage in efforts to work towards unified political leadership. In view of upcoming round of talks in Cairo, we strongly encourage intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind President Mahmoud Abbas, which is key not only for the future of the peace process but also for the implementation of reconstruction efforts in Gaza. Palestinians need a Government that enjoys legitimacy among their own population and is acceptable as a partner to Israel and to the international community. Such a Government

needs to be fully committed to the two-State solution and the other principles of the peace process.

.In their efforts towards lasting peace in the region, the parties have the firm support of the international community, with the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet as its main actors. The international conference on the Middle East peace process that the Russian Federation plans to convene in Moscow in the course of this year in consultation with the Quartet and the parties will provide the international community with another important occasion to demonstrate that support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bedouma Alain Yoda, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Yoda (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like at the outset, Mr. President, to thank you and the delegation of the Russian Federation for having taken the initiative to organize this meeting, thus giving us the opportunity to consider the important issue of the situation in the Middle East, of which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the main Gordian knot. We are convinced that our deliberations, in which Burkina Faso is pleased to take part, will be fruitful and will contribute to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

Allow me, in that regard, Sir, to pay tribute to the important role that your country plays in that joint endeavour, which you have reaffirmed by offering to host an international conference on the Middle East in Moscow this year. We support that proposal, and we have no doubt that the outcome of the planned meeting will be commensurate with our expectations. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has never spared any efforts in helping to resolve the conflict in the Middle East. I also congratulate him on his important remarks this morning.

No one can deny today that the peace, security and stability of the Middle East are an important component — indeed that they are at the heart — of international peace and security. Thus, it is the duty of the international community, with the Security Council in the lead, and in all our interests to make every effort to ensure that calm prevails in that region.

Unfortunately, the events of recent months have powerfully shaken the foundations of the admittedly modest progress that the peace process had so painstakingly achieved. The war in Gaza and the attendant grave humanitarian suffering, the ever-increasing violence and the threats issued by parties to the conflict are all factors that have complicated, indeed halted, the momentum of the ongoing dialogue established by the Annapolis Conference.

However, by adopting resolution 1850 (2008), the Security Council marked its resolute commitment to the irreversibility of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process started at Annapolis. For Burkina Faso, in letter and in spirit, that resolution and the other relevant Council resolutions, including resolution 1860 (2009), remain relevant, and we call for their full implementation.

We would also like to reaffirm the importance, in our view, of the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, and we welcome the endeavours of the Quartet. Convinced that those are today the most appropriate political and legal frameworks for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, we urge the parties to abide by them and once and for all to permanently forsake recourse to arms in order to resolutely commit in good faith to direct talks.

Moreover, my delegation believes that those talks must be irreversible and nurtured by a single vision: that of a peaceful region, in the building of which an independent, viable Palestinian State, with secure and internationally recognized borders, living side and by side in peace with the State of Israel, itself living in peace with all its neighbours, will fully participate.

That, we believe, is the price to pay. We know that the Israelis and Palestinians are capable of paying it, having, in 2008, proved the desire to resolve their dispute, including by maintaining ongoing contact and by diligently pursuing their negotiations. We are thus convinced that, this time again, they can overcome the present circumstances and renew the thread of dialogue, which the whole international community urges with all its heart.

That involves a first step, perhaps the most difficult, but certainly the most indispensable: that of establishing a genuine climate of trust by adopting the necessary measures, namely an end to extremist rhetoric by all sides; a halt to Israel's construction of the separation wall and to its settlement policies; the lifting of the Gaza blockade; and guarantees of

humanitarian access. It also means Hamas ceasing its rocket fire and other forms of violence on Israeli territory.

Furthermore, in order to optimize their participation in the talks and to draw the maximum benefit from them, it is essential and urgent that the Palestinians achieve their unity. That is why we are particularly grateful to Egypt for its commitment and its untiring efforts to help the Palestinian brethren achieve reconciliation, and we call on the international community to support these initiatives.

While emphasizing the need for medium- and long-term solutions to the conflict, we cannot ignore the current situation of the people of Gaza, for whom the most urgent issues today are resolving the humanitarian crisis and carrying out reconstruction. The pledging conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh on 2 March 2009 enabled the donor community to become involved in those crucial issues. We hope that promises will be translated into concrete action. Likewise, humanitarian aid and construction materials should be able to reach Gaza unimpeded. Similar efforts should be made throughout the occupied Palestinian territories.

Clearly, the challenges to be met in the Middle East are still great and the expectations even greater. Indeed, with the exception of the hopes aroused by Lebanon, including the improvement in Syrian-Lebanese relations, the Middle East, unfortunately, remains in the grip of many tensions and the option of political coexistence between Israel and its Arab neighbours has yet to be put to the test. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that the aspiration to peace and security for them and for future generations will prevail over bellicose behaviour and the mindset of confrontation.

Because the stability of the entire region remains dependent on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is essential to devote unflagging attention to it. In addition, the countries in the region and beyond must continue diplomatic initiatives in support of the parties' efforts. In that respect, the Security Council has a primary role to play, including by finding ways to ensure compliance with the many decisions that it has adopted since this conflict was included among the priority issues on its agenda. Its credibility and that of the United Nations system as a whole are at stake.

Finally, the solution of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is unthinkable without the determination of the parties themselves. We therefore invite them to show greater political will and a heightened sense of their responsibilities.

In conclusion, we should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having submitted to the Council a draft presidential statement that we support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Mr. Davutoğlu (Turkey): First, I would like to thank the Russian Federation and Minister Lavrov for convening this timely meeting, which has provided us with the opportunity to exchange views on recent developments in the Middle East. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his statement regarding the current situation on the ground.

The dynamism of events and the pace of developments in the Middle East require the international community to be alert and active at all times. Despite all the frustrating problems in the region, we believe that there is no room for pessimism. On the contrary, recent diplomatic activities and the determination of the international community to attain the ultimate objective of establishing peace and stability in the region have raised our hopes for the future.

As the problems in the region have become interrelated, it is no longer feasible to address them in isolation. We therefore need a comprehensive approach and believe that the peace process should be reinvigorated on all tracks without further delay.

The Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict are at the top of our agenda. The rift among Palestinians has to come to an end. Palestinian groups have to find common ground so as to tackle outstanding issues, thus leading to a national unity Government and paving the way for the holding of presidential and legislative elections. The establishment of a strong Palestinian Administration with popular support is essential. Turkey hopes that national reconciliation talks between Palestinian groups will succeed, and we continue to support Egypt's efforts to that end.

We need to engage every Palestinian group that has the support of the Palestinian people and to ensure

that they all adhere to the principles of peace. In that context, we welcome the cessation of the launching of rockets as a positive and encouraging sign.

We hope that the new Government in Israel will adopt a policy that will restore hopes for the peace process and renew commitment to the two-State solution. On the other hand, we are concerned by certain policies that could seriously hamper peace efforts. Among them are Jewish settlement activities, restrictions on the movement of Palestinian people and goods, and actions and measures that could alter the character and status of Jerusalem and further isolate East Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian territory. All of these run counter to the parties' obligations under the Road Map, as well as to the spirit of Annapolis, and should be stopped. I would also like to emphasize that the Arab Peace Initiative provides a very sound basis for peace between Arab States and Israel, and that Israel should give the Initiative the attention that it deserves.

The presidential statement that we are going to adopt at the end of this meeting could have been more inclusive and precise. Nevertheless, we will join the consensus. However, I would like to clarify our interpretation and understanding of the text before us.

First, it must be emphasized that the objective of comprehensive peace can be achieved only through the reinvigoration of the peace process on all its tracks. Secondly, we cannot turn a blind eye to the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, particularly in Gaza. In that context, it is good to refer to resolution 1860 (2009), but that is not enough. It is incumbent on us to call for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009) and to address the humanitarian situation in Gaza through the unimpeded provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance throughout the region.

One priority of Turkish foreign policy towards the region is to keep open the channels of dialogue with all parties and to pursue an active policy of engagement. We welcome the fact that a growing number of countries have come to realize the merits of that policy and have adopted similar approaches.

We are committed to continuing to contribute to efforts aimed at a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on the vision of a region in which two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders.

If hopes for peace are exhausted, that will only lead to further suffering of the peoples in the region and provide a fertile breeding ground for extremism and terrorism, which constitute a grave threat to all of us. From that perspective, it is my earnest hope that we will all be engaged in active diplomatic activities in the coming days. In that context, I look forward to the convening of an international conference on the Middle East peace process in Moscow in 2009.

Before concluding, I wish to emphasize the fact that the Israelis and the Palestinians are destined to live and work together. They can choose either to remain enemies and suffer together or to become good neighbours and friends and prosper together. It is high time that the right choice be made.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bernard Kouchner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

Mr. Kouchner (France) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Lavrov, as well as the Secretary-General for his encouraging words, and to tell members that we are not satisfied by the progress made. That progress has been insufficient, despite the efforts of many of the countries represented around this table.

Almost four months ago to the day, our countries met here to adopt an appeal for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza. Since then, the most difficult phase of the conflict has ended. I believe that our appeal and our efforts in New York contributed to that. However, most of the objectives set out in resolution 1860 (2009), to which all preceding speakers have referred, have not yet been attained, and we are far from attaining them.

First, the situation on the ground in Gaza remains extremely worrisome; that is a euphemism. Humanitarian workers and aid have barely entered the Gaza Strip. For the most part, the blockade is still in place. Reconstruction is impossible, or nearly impossible. Checkpoints should be opened in a lasting way for all goods; we have all requested that. There is also no lasting ceasefire, and rocket launches, though episodic, continue. Our compatriot Gilad Shalit and the Palestinian prisoners have not yet been released.

It is essential that Palestinians speak with a single voice. Inter-Palestinian reconciliation efforts under the

authority of President Abbas, in compliance with the principles that guide the peace process, must be successful. My country wishes once again to back the work of Egypt on this issue.

Finally — and this is the main objective of our meeting and the aspect that I would like to develop today — we have to again be in a position to turn to the future in order to achieve peace. The year 2008 started with hope, with a return to inter-Palestinian negotiations on the final status. Ultimately, it was not possible to keep to the timeline for the completion of those negotiations agreed upon in Annapolis, but resolution 1850 (2008) very clearly recalled the irreversibility of this process. We do not have to refer to it by the name of Annapolis.

The military operations in Gaza brutally interrupted the thread of negotiations. Must we therefore conclude that the time is not right to relaunch the peace process? No, no and no. If there is a message that France intends to share with the Council today, it is, on the contrary, the sense of urgency that should drive us — urgency because of the veritable ticking bomb that is the situation in Gaza Strip, urgency because of the critical financial situation of the Palestinian Authority, urgency because of the growing weariness of both the people of Palestine and the people of Israel, and finally, urgency because we must not lose track of the Palestinian elections planned for January 2010.

For us, the window of opportunity, as we say, is now one that is calculated in terms of months, not in years. Thus, we must step up our efforts to facilitate resumption of political negotiations that would lead to a comprehensive peace. For us, the existence and the security of Israel are not negotiable. However, we are just as firmly committed to achieving the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and in our view, only the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State will make it possible to combine these two objectives.

To be successful, peace must be moved forward by the leaders. Our friends have said that. However, the greatest attention must be paid to the second element. It is just as necessary that the peoples believe in the possibility of peace. They now no longer believe in it. Immediate measures in the field are necessary to create the right conditions for negotiations.

The continuation of Israeli settlement undermines on a daily basis the credibility of efforts aimed at a lasting solution by creating fait accomplis on the ground and insisting on splitting the West Bank into two parts and totally isolating East Jerusalem. As President Sarkozy stated when he spoke before the Knesset in June 2008, "There can be no peace without the immediate and complete cessation of settlement activities". The Government of Israel must hear this message — this friendly message: continuing settlement is one of the main obstacles in the field to peace and eventually poses a threat to the security of Israel. The presidential statement to be adopted at the end of our meeting would be stronger, in my view, if it took into account this essential issue.

France, of course, calls upon the Palestinian Authority to continue its efforts to combat terrorism. The actions of Salam Fayyad, former Prime Minister, in this area deserve tribute. Terrorism and attacks in all their forms, as well as the trafficking of weapons into Gaza, are all unacceptable and must come to an end.

A comprehensive regional approach is also needed through work, inter alia, on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of the peace process. We cherish the hope that indirect negotiations between Syria and Israel may resume and that the question of the village of Gashar and Sheba'a Farms may be settled between Israel and the Government of Lebanon, under the aegis of the United Nations.

Beyond that, the whole region that must become involved in seeking peace. That is why we so greatly value the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative —2002! We are so far from that now — which takes into account seven interdependencies. We must think about the measures of trust and the acts necessary by one party or another to achieve the objectives set by that initiative.

To prepare for the future and for peace is also to accept working on the past, without fear. We cannot ignore today allegations of violations of international humanitarian law noted since the Gaza crisis. France backed the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Board of Inquiry on attacks against United Nations premises in Gaza. I have also indicated that France would back any investigation as long as it is impartial, independent and covers all violations of international humanitarian law regardless of who the victims are, be they Palestinian or Israeli civilians. In the light of the conclusions of the Board of Inquiry which have just been communicated to us, we will have to consider this issue in the next few days.

My final message is that stronger commitment by the international community is needed. Only such a commitment can guarantee that serious peace negotiations will resume and rapidly succeed. Only such a commitment provides the parties with assurance that the terms of an agreement will effectively be complied with, thanks to the direct contributions of third countries in the form of manpower, financial resources and guarantees. I know that meetings will be completed at the end of this month, which completion we await with impatience.

France and the European Union have on numerous occasions voiced their readiness to support and facilitate and, as necessary, to participate in negotiations and ponder the guarantees that a possible agreement might require. I note with much hope the intentions declared by the new American Administration. I wish to say to it here that we will be ready to work with the United States for a new dynamic, but it can wait no longer.

I said at the start that the matter is urgent need and, in that context, with all the arguments that I tried to emphasize, we bring our full support to the plan to organize a new international conference on the Middle East this year, as proposed by the Russian Federation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Mr. David Miliband, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Miliband (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes this debate, and we thank the Russian Federation for its initiative in opening it. We also thank the Secretary-General for his very strong words today.

This meeting comes just a week before the start of an intensive series of visits to Washington, as the new United States Administration fulfils its commitment to offer the leadership necessary to address both the insecurity of Israelis and the statelessness of the Palestinians. Today, our duty is not just to state national positions. It is to unite our commitment in word and deed to support the development of a new plan for peace.

After 61 years of temporary truce and bloody wars, it can sometimes seem inevitable that the conflict in the Middle East will continue for at least a few more years and that the best we can hope for is that it not get too much worse. But that logic is not faulty; it is dangerous. Conflict can erupt again a time.

The Gaza war showed how close to the su conflict is in the occupied Palestinian Terri Resolution 1860 (2009) was a hard-fought achieve that laid the basis for an end to the Gaza confli January. But there is, as many speakers have al said, overwhelming evidence that it is has not fully implemented. More work remains to be do reopen the crossings, to get humanitarian aid in a bring an end to arms smuggling. It is relevant t deliberations that the only people who gain from failure are those committed to violence. There are other outstanding issues arising from the Gaza including the Secretary-General's Board of In report on attacks on United Nations premises. We to the Israeli Government to investigate each of incidents in the light of the Inquiry's findings.

The West Bank, meanwhile, is in econ limbo. The Palestinian Authority is short of f Israeli settlement building continues, with demoli and settlements in East Jerusalem particu dangerous for peace. Meanwhile, rockets contin land in Israeli towns, the rearmament of Hizbollah contravention of resolution 1559 (2004), and exploits the misery of Palestinians to advance its goals. That is why the Secretary-General was rig his remarks this morning to refer to a crisi confidence.

President Obama has said that the status q unsustainable. We need to take that seri Destructive forces in the Middle East have de strength from the perceived inaction or initiatives of the international community. With decisive drive for peace, there will be a drift tow more war.

The Council is not short of consensus ab solution. We share the passion and conviction o French colleagues in setting this out. The broad has been clear for some time: a comprehensive p based on two States, agreed borders based on the 1967, Jerusalem as the capital for both States, a just settlement for refugees. As His Excellency Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey has expla all this is a catalyst for a resolution of other i dividing Israel from its neighbours.

Nor is there much argument about the short-term measures that would give life to hope among the people in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Palestinians want to see a freeze on all settlement activity, both in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, as per Road Map commitments, and the opening of crossings into Gaza not only for humanitarian aid, but also for reconstruction supplies and the movement of people and trade, as per resolution 1860 (2009). They also want to see the Palestinian Authority properly funded by all of its donors. The United Kingdom believes that they are right to want these things.

Israelis want to see an end to the threat of terror and the release of Gilad Shalit. Again, they are right to want these things. What has been missing is shared and sustained political will to overcome the obstacles, and now is the time to find it — too late for too many, but urgent nonetheless.

In this context, the creation of a new Israeli Government takes on added significance. Prime Minister Netanyahu leads a Government born of the democratic process. The United Kingdom welcomes his public commitments, restated today, to political, economic and security tracks. Progress on each one is vital, needs to be delineated and requires support.

Meanwhile, Israel has a willing partner for negotiations in President Abbas. The Palestinians need a Government. If the Egyptian-sponsored talks on Palestinian reconciliation are not to reach a conclusion, then we look forward to a new Government being formed with a clear commitment to the peaceful advance of the interests of the Palestinian people, as resolution 1850 (2008) envisaged, and above all a determination to improve their daily lives in advance of Palestinian elections. This, too, needs support.

But, Israelis and Palestinians cannot deliver this deal on their own. Israelis need peace with the whole Arab world, as well as cooperation with the Palestinians. Palestinians need support from the Arab world as well as compromise from Israel. This is the 23-State solution that we need, and is embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative, which is finally getting the recognition that it deserves. We applaud the vision and commitment of its principal author, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. We welcome the determination and fresh thinking of King Abdullah of Jordan to advance its goals.

The Arab Peace Initiative is in fact an Arab deposit that needs to be matched. The United Kingdom has been proud to play its part alongside other European countries, not just in arguing for a regional resolution to all outstanding issues, but also in supporting the economic and security strategies of the Palestinian Authority. There is no issue that will motivate Europeans more than the chance to support a drive for peace in the Middle East. The European deposit with all partners is an unyielding commitment to be a force for practical help — money, training, people, commitment — to all parties as they seek to prepare for and then implement a final deal.

There is also a Russian deposit — its commitment to work for an international conference to support a peace plan and your role in the E3+3 and in this Council in ensuring that Iran abides by its commitments to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Since we last met in January, we have been in what for us has been a holding pattern. This has been understandable, but this, too, is a euphemism. For people of the region, it has been lost time, and anyone who thinks that a stable holding pattern can continue indefinitely is gravely mistaken. The people of the region do not need a new process; they need the confidence that comes from a plan, with the timelines and commitment to make it a reality. Our message to Israelis, Palestinians and the region must be clear and undivided. We support peace and we expect peace. The challenges ahead are indeed great. Bold decisions will be needed on all sides, but the consequences of inaction will be even more severe.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica.

Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, the Security Council is meeting to discuss an issue about which almost everything has already been said. Few situations have attracted as much attention, led to so many meetings, mobilized so many actors and generated as much disappointment and frustration as the situation in the Middle East. We are definitely facing a graveyard of lost opportunities in a region of the world that is saturated with history. However, we must not hesitate; on the contrary, we must continue to press forward. To that end, we trust that the debate to which the Russian Federation has invited us will produced added value.

My country believes that the international community must insist that the parties most directly concerned negotiate and accept from the outset that a final and definitive solution will not give them everything they hope for or claim, or even what they believe to be fair. The time has come to relinquish rigid positions based on the past — a past that no longer exists for either party, because the greatest injustice is that which has continued for more than six decades. We have lived through six decades of misunderstandings, confrontations, regression and disenchantment, occasionally interrupted by interludes or some progress that have led us to believe that peace was still possible. It has been six decades of intolerance and violence on both sides that have deprived both peoples of the right to live free of fear.

We all know that there are many obstacles on the path to peace; some seem insurmountable and cannot be overcome. But we cannot gloss over the fact that the behaviour of either party can affect the behaviour of the other, although it cannot justify it. Certainly, Costa Rica does not ignore the mutual interdependence among all of the fundamental elements of a final status agreement. Each obstacle and element deserves our full attention, but first and foremost the attention of the parties most directly involved: Israel and Palestine.

Costa Rica is convinced that the only possible peace is one that is agreed between the parties, with the international community strongly behind them and watching over the success of the negotiations. However, the international community must be committed to a solution, and not consider it an opportunity to gain diplomatic points, renew past lustre, or possibly derive some personal profit or even hold a letter of credit that might be redeemed in some future game of chess.

While we are all betting on the success of the Quartet, my country believes that it is time to recognize that the Road Map is fatally skewed. It is a Road Map to nowhere. It is an itinerary with stages and stops, but no clear goal or destination. For that reason, Costa Rica believes that the entire Road Map process should be addressed from another perspective — in other words, start from the perspective of the final stage. The parameters and outlines of a definitive solution must be crafted and made known from the outset with total clarity. The destination should be recognized as a guarantee for the necessary intermediate and temporary agreements that will promote definitive solution and make the process irreversible. All must be committed to the final goal. Otherwise, the Quartet will continue, to go in circles without any sense of direction.

Similarly, given that in the immediate and not-so-immediate neighbourhood there are so many actors wishing to obstruct the process, there is no reason to require that final negotiations resolve issues that are difficult but not fundamental and that have an impact on the process while not capable of resolving it. Such false logic has given those who thrive on intolerance and violence too many opportunities to sabotage the peace.

The frameworks of step-by-step negotiations have been a snare in which hope has often been trapped. That is why it is doubly important that the outlines of a final outcome be known in advance. Costa Rica understood this when on 5 February 2008 it recognized the State of Palestine, thus paying a historical debt, in particular because it was among the 33 countries that voted in favour of the partition resolution (General Assembly resolution 181 (II)). It is time for the international community — starting with those 33 countries, several of which are represented in this Chamber — to recognize the existence of two States and to support a final, peaceful solution to a situation that has already generated far too much intolerance and violence and which urgently requires closure in keeping with the best interests of the parties.

With such a bold gesture, we would strengthen the democratic Government of President Abbas and would place it in a position of greater symmetry vis-à-vis other parties to the conflict. In that way, on behalf of the Palestinian people and along with Israel, it would be in a position to chart the path towards a future free from violence for its people and for the entire region. Such a political gesture could become a symbol with the power to shape reality.

It is time to call the fundamental elements of the conflict by their proper names, and to support the parties in reaching lasting, concrete, verifiable and final agreements. That is the spirit of past efforts that we must retrieve. We must turn our attention to the parties concerned and their regional neighbours, who are the ones suffering the most from the consequences of the conflict. The more involved the parties concerned are in defining the elements of peace

initiatives, the greater their commitment to speedy and effective implementation.

That is a lesson that we in Central America can vouch for. Like the Israelis and the Palestinians, we had to undergo suffering to understand that the solution lay within ourselves and that, in the final analysis, it takes more courage to agree than to reject. In the meantime, we must immediately allow and facilitate unobstructed, continuous and timely access for humanitarian assistance to the population of the occupied Palestinian territories. Similarly, we must reverse the growth of illegal settlements, in conformity with agreements reached, avoiding any measure that would alter the demographic character of the occupied territories or cause deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinians.

Also, Palestine must strengthen measures to combat violence, extremism and terrorism and must exercise control over its own territory.

In our view, two actors are indispensable in following up the process: the United States — particularly now, with a new Administration that believes in the audacity of hope and that has been linked to or associated with all efforts to find a solution — and the moderate Arab countries that are neighbours of the parties. Some of these countries have learned from the errors of the past and can become solid partners for peace. The two countries that have signed peace agreement with Israel — Egypt and Jordan — as well as Saudi Arabia, have a great deal to contribute. That is why Costa Rica considers that the Arab Peace Initiative is an important contribution in that regard.

Let me comment briefly on the draft presidential statement on which we have been working. We will be flexible in order not to prevent its adoption, but let me note that we would have preferred clearer and more resolute emphasis on and support for the Arab Peace Initiative, and a recognition of the Initiative for what it is: in Mr. Miliband's words, a "deposit that needs to be matched" (*supra*). We would also have preferred more precise direction for the work of the Quartet and we would have preferred to somewhat reorder the paragraphs. But we are satisfied at the acceptance of our request for the elimination of any reference to a preparatory process for Palestine to acquire full statehood: as I have said, my country already recognizes the State of Palestine.

The time has come to start with the ultimate goal of two independent States living side by side in peace and security. The time has come to put an end to the cruel irony that the only democratic Arab State is living under the oppression of foreign occupation. The time has come to put an end to a situation that, if unresolved, will only encourage extremists and that has strengthened, among others, the deniers in Tehran.

We will never stop saying that in the Middle East there can be no final victory of one over the other. Peace is the fruit of endeavours by moderate voices that accept the coexistence, side by side, of two independent States living in peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Susan Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States of America and member of President Obama's Cabinet.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report.

As much as I very much like Ambassador Churkin, it is an honour to have you, Foreign Minister Lavrov, in the Chair today. We thank you for convening this important meeting of the Security Council, and we welcome especially Russia's initiative to craft a constructive statement by the Council President, to be released today, which the United States is pleased to support.

This meeting of the Council underscores the priority that the international community places on achieving a secure, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. That must include a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. The United States has already revitalized its efforts to make real that vision of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours, and we will continue to pursue it vigorously in the months ahead.

President Obama is personally committed to this goal, and he continues to lead directly on this issue. As the President noted in his recent address to the Turkish parliament, the parties have also committed themselves to those goals, in the Road Map and at Annapolis. Our interest lies not in a lengthy, drawn-out process, but in real results. We must not tarry. Lasting progress can be made if we lift our sights and look to a future of peace: to a Middle East in which Israel lives in peace and

security alongside its Arab neighbours; to a region in which the fruits of peace are cherished by all.

As President Obama has noted, terrorism and rocket fire aimed at innocent Israelis are simply intolerable. And a future without hope and opportunity for the Palestinians is intolerable as well. Towards that end, my Government's distinguished and determined Special Envoy for the Middle East, Senator George Mitchell, recently completed his third trip to the region. He is working intensively with our Israeli and Arab partners, as well as our friends throughout the international community, towards a very clear purpose: to help create the conditions for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and for the establishment of an independent, viable Palestinian State.

In addition to moving forward with the parties, his work is also designed to prevent any new outbreak of violence, which could further destabilize the region, hinder our collective efforts and claim more innocent civilian lives. To further advance this cause, President Obama will be meeting with key regional leaders over the course of the next several weeks. We very much look forward to those constructive talks, and we look forward to discussing ways in which the international community can support these efforts with our Quartet partners and other friends and allies. The Quartet remains the most effective instrument for advancing the international community's engagement in the effort to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

As we move to create a climate for meaningful negotiations, all parties must meet their obligations under the Road Map. The Palestinian Authority must combat terrorism and incitement directed at Israel. The United States and its partners have provided funding and training for a reformed Palestinian security force, which has recently provided impressive demonstrations of its professionalism and effectiveness.

For its part, Israel must halt settlement activity and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. Israel must also allow the Palestinians freedom of movement, increased security responsibilities and access to economic opportunities.

All States in the region must now consider steps that they can take to create an atmosphere that will help foster successful negotiations. That is one reason why we intend to integrate the Arab Peace Initiative into our own approach. In this spirit we welcome the remarks made by King Abdullah of Jordan during his productive recent visit to Washington. As he noted, United States cannot be left to do all the heavy lif by itself, and other countries, including Jordan, sh do all that they can to shore up our common efforts

We must also work together to support fully Palestinian Authority as it continues its effort improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians throug the West Bank and Gaza. It is doing so through partisan, transparent programmes. Indeed, the W Bank and the International Monetary Fund endorsed the Authority's budgetary and fina controls in accounting for the $1.7 billion it rece from all donors in 2008. The international commu must continue to support the legitimate Palest leadership. States in the region have a parti responsibility.

President Abbas, Prime Minister Fayyad an Palestinian Authority must be able to demonstra the Palestinian people that negotiations, not terr and violence, are the path to an independent and v Palestinian State.

In this context, let me turn to the Q principles: renouncing violence, recognizing Israel respecting past obligations. The United States h that all United Nations Members, especially States, will recognize what these principles repre They are the essential building blocks of a f Palestinian State. Palestinian reconciliation on t that do not uphold the Quartet principles would only to delay the day when the Palestinians' legiti aspirations for statehood become real.

My Government also values Egypt's leadersh the region and its support for peace. All United Na Member States, including those in the region, work together to ensure the end of the illicit smug of arms and ammunition into Gaza, lest Hamas re its arsenal and spark further conflict. We str support reopening Gaza's border crossings controlled, sustained and continuous manner wi appropriate monitoring regime involving internat and Palestinian Authority participation. That ca achieved through dialogue focused on meeting pre humanitarian needs. It will not happen through ter intimidation and violence.

Separately, we also look forward to the upco elections in Lebanon, which must be free, fai unmarred by violence, intimidation and o influence. We need to continue to support th

implementation of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006) in order to protect Lebanon's hard-won sovereignty and independence. We must continue to insist on an end to weapons-smuggling and on the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon, including Hezbollah.

It should be the role of all of us to help the parties move forward in pursuit of peace and to do nothing to hinder their efforts. We must look beyond the smoke of war and avoid the easy temptations of recrimination and rancour. Together we must focus on a shared vision of peace and security. The stakes are high. Our actions will help determine what kind of future the children of the Middle East will inherit — whether they will be able to look ahead to a hopeful, prosperous future, or whether they will be forced to endure round after dismal round of bloodshed, crisis, instability and terror.

In the past, visionary leaders such as Anwar al-Sadat, Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein of Jordan bravely and selflessly devoted themselves to the cause of peace. The question for our generation is simple and stark: whether history will consign us to the ranks of those who let hatred and grievance linger, or whether history will honour us with a place in the camp of the peacemakers. The United States has made its choice. We ask you all to stand with us. Together, let us stand for lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Shintaro Ito, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Ito (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I extend our deepest appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for organizing this important meeting. I would also like to express our gratitude for the work of the Secretary-General and the Quartet to date.

The Middle East peace process is at a critical juncture, with new political developments on many fronts. Japan believes that the Security Council should continue to play a constructive role in the Middle East peace process.

We sincerely hope that the new Israeli Government will strive for the realization of a Middle East peace based on the two-State solution. We strongly call on the Israeli Government to fulfil its obligations under the Road Map and Security Council resolution 1850 (2008). Japan expects that the Government of Israel will strive to achieve a peace in the Middle East by overcoming the current obstacles in cooperation with the international community.

Improving the humanitarian conditions in Gaza is a top priority for all of us. From that perspective, it is necessary to keep the crossings open continuously. At the same time, we condemn the sporadic rocket attacks on Israel, which undermine not only the security of Israeli citizens but also the efforts for the reconstruction of Gaza and the peace process. Here again, I call on the parties to fulfil their obligations under Council resolution 1860 (2009).

To realize a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, it is also indispensable for the Arab States to play a more active role. The Arab Peace Initiative can serve as a solid foundation for a comprehensive Middle East peace.

At the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, in which I participated, Japan pledged $200 million in assistance to the Palestinians. Japan is supporting the efforts of the Palestinians under the Palestinian Authority led by President Abbas to build a viable national economy through the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative and other projects, in order to realize the establishment of a Palestinian State comprising the West Bank and Gaza.

Japan also has been actively engaged in the Middle East peace process through its diplomatic efforts. Foreign Minister Nakasone visited the region last week. In Egypt he reiterated our unchanged support for Egyptian efforts for the realization of peace based on the two-State solution. Mr. Tatsuo Arima, our Special Envoy for the Middle East, also visited Israel and the Palestinian territories last week to assist in reinvigorating the peace process.

Last November, a historic series of high-level meetings of the General Assembly was held here in New York, with the attendance of leaders from around the world, including those of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, as well as our Special Envoy, Mr. Koumura. At the meeting, the leaders stressed that peace could only be cultivated through dialogue and tolerance. In that regard, I wish to stress the importance of a balanced approach in pursuing peace. There are many factors underlying conflicts, such as poverty and despair. Resorting to force will not be the ultimate solution to these problems. We need to help ensure a

decent standard of living for those in dire situations and work to achieve economic prosperity and improve the quality of education. Values such as pluralism, multiculturalism, tolerance and moderation are required in order to achieve peace. They can be developed through dialogue among civilizations. I believe that our efforts to that end will benefit generations to come.

Over the course of our history, Japan has always aspired to accommodate differences and learn to coexist with others. Differences should not lead to mutual estrangement, but rather should serve as a catalyst for enriching a society. We believe with conviction that the ultimate goal of diplomacy is to create a global society in which people of different cultures, religions and ideologies can live together in peace.

We hope to be a reliable partner of the parties to the Middle East peace process. Japan believes it has a constructive role to play in the achievement of peace and prosperity in the region. We will do whatever we can in the form of financial as well as intellectual contributions. We will maintain our commitment to the two-State solution, which will make it possible for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side in peace.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Davor Božinović, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Croatia.

Mr. Božinović (Croatia): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his statement and expressing my country's appreciation for the personal efforts he has invested in helping to advance the Middle East peace process. Let me also express our gratitude to Foreign Minister Lavrov and his delegation for organizing this timely debate, which focuses our attention on the need to reinvigorate diplomatic action on reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In many of its aspects, the Arab-Israeli conflict remains the defining conflict of our time. Tension and turbulence in the region often reverberate globally. Conversely, the dynamics on the international scene have not always been conducive to achieving a solution. We deem this to be an opportune moment that provides the right context and momentum, which should be harnessed to achieve a final and lasting peace.

At the heart of this lies the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. While respecting its essentially bilateral nature, we also recognize that unwavering international support to the process and to the parties' efforts is critical in creating the political context for successful negotiations.

We should also not lose sight of the regional dimension of the process. For its part, Croatia values the efforts of responsible regional partners towards securing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, including the Arab Peace Initiative. We recognize and commend the role played by the United States in this regard and are encouraged by the early and principled engagement of President Obama's Administration with regional actors, including with both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Today's meeting comes at a critical time when all efforts should be channelled into preserving this momentum and creating an environment that would allow the parties to continue to build on the progress achieved, guided by the principles and mutual understanding reflected in resolution 1850 (2008), which the Council adopted last December.

Last year, we witnessed the evolution of a comprehensive, direct and results-oriented Israeli-Palestinian negotiating process within the framework set out at Annapolis. There was also the opening of important regional tracks between Israel and Syria and between Syria and Lebanon. Despite the recent impasse, we cannot afford to lose the momentum that has been achieved. We therefore welcome the Russian initiative to provide new impetus for a comprehensive peace process, on both the Israeli-Palestinian and the Syrian-Lebanese tracks, primarily through preparations for the Moscow conference.

For Croatia, resolution 1850 (2008) remains an important benchmark. It emphasizes the irreversibility of the peace talks and the need to advance the process under the Annapolis guiding principles, as well as the need to intensify efforts to foster mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence in the region. I would like to reiterate here our belief in the ongoing peace process based on a regional approach and on a two-State solution — a democratic and peaceful Palestine living side by side with a democratic and secure Israel — and in the need to advance the momentum towards just, lasting and comprehensive peace for the Middle East.

It is important that the parties continue to engage in direct and substantive negotiations at all levels and that they receive our full support along that journey. We recognize the challenges that the parties face on that journey, even more so now in the wake of the recent conflict in Gaza and the sensitive period of political transition. We welcome the opportunity that the formation of the new Israeli Government can bring in providing for the resumption and consolidation of the peace talks.

We also understand that the dynamics in Gaza cannot be separated from the broader picture and the efforts towards achieving a comprehensive peace. Gaza remains in dire and urgent need of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. Despite encouraging donor responses in the aftermath of the crisis, we are mindful that reconstruction and the long-term recovery and development of Gaza depend principally on a stable and secure environment, which in turn remains critical for the sustained opening of Gaza crossings, as requested in resolution 1860 (2009).

Moreover, the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009), which includes putting an end to arms smuggling and the capacity of Hamas and other militant groups to launch attacks against Israel, is critical for attaining a durable ceasefire. In that regard, let me reiterate our appreciation for international and regional efforts, notably those of Egypt.

The aftermath of the crisis in Gaza has highlighted the significance of intra-Palestinian reconciliation. We support efforts to that end and would support a Palestinian Government that renounces violence and respects previous agreements and obligations, as well as the Quartet principles.

As the political and diplomatic processes remain inextricably linked with the situation on the ground, we hope to see tangible changes in accordance with the obligations to which both parties committed themselves under the Road Map, which were reaffirmed at Annapolis. We also hope that both parties will refrain from all measures that risk prejudging the outcome of negotiations or eroding trust and confidence.

Furthermore, we understand that development and peace are mutually reinforcing and that economic development is an essential part of a lasting solution. Here too, sustained international engagement remains critical, both to stimulate Palestinian economic renewal and for the reform processes, notably in the sphere of security and the rule of law. The ability of the Palestinian Authority to build credible institutions and a security infrastructure that is willing and able to combat terrorism and anarchy remains an essential element of Palestinian State-building and a legitimate expectation on the Israeli side.

We understand, through personal experience from our region, that the current period is beset by challenges for both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides. This makes it all the more important that the international community, including this Council and the active Quartet, continue to encourage the parties to persist in their efforts towards achieving the shared goals of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for the Middle East, with two States, a democratic and peaceful Palestine living side by side with a democratic and secure Israel.

Before finishing, my delegation would also like to thank the Russian delegation for preparing the draft presidential statement that we are about to adopt and other Council delegations for the constructive position and flexibility shown in bringing this consensus text together.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Le Luong Minh, Permanent Representative and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, I would like to start by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Government of the Russian Federation for taking the initiative of organizing this important debate of the Council. We welcome the presence of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and thank him for his statement.

This debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, is taking place at a critical juncture, when recent positive developments are being overshadowed by continued insecurity, instability and increasing tensions in the region. We are heartened by the increasing international consensus rejecting violence in support of a peaceful solution; the positive outcome of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in early March 2009; and the continued undertakings to translate such a positive outcome into concrete actions in support of the National Early

Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza presented by the Palestinian Government.

These positive developments, however, cannot overshadow the extent and scope of challenges facing the international community. We note with great concern that, more than three months since the temporary ceasefire was announced, Israeli military incursions into the occupied Palestinian territory and rocket attacks against populated areas in Israel continue to take place. While Palestinian civilians in Gaza are struggling to cope with the numerous hardships and difficulties caused by the 22-month siege, tensions in the West Bank continue to escalate as a result of Israel's expansion of illegal settlements and construction of the separation wall.

Repeated cycles of violence and counter-violence over the years demonstrate more clearly than ever that a lasting solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict must be a comprehensive one that takes into account the legitimate interests and rights of all the parties concerned. We support the collective efforts of the United Nations, the Quartet, the League of Arab States and regional countries in search of a two-State solution based on internationally recognized guidelines such as the Road Map, the Annapolis outcome, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the recent resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009). Viet Nam is ready to join efforts to reactivate and move forward the Middle East peace process.

The recent tragic events in Gaza have caused the loss of many innocent lives, including those of women and children, and created and prolonged a humanitarian crisis, making the living conditions of the Palestinian people there more and more difficult. We urge all the parties concerned to lift all restrictions, create every condition necessary to facilitate humanitarian relief operations, and abide by international humanitarian and human rights law. We commend United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and other humanitarian organizations for their bravery in rendering emergency and humanitarian assistance to Gazans. While reaffirming Viet Nam's position that any attack against diplomatic and United Nations premises and personnel is unacceptable, we take note of the report of the Board of Inquiry, prepared at the request of the Secretary-General and the appeal of the Security Council, and support investigations to determine the culprits.

Intra-Palestinian unity is an important factor for making the Middle East peace process sustainable. Continuing our support for the Palestinian National Authority, we hope that all Palestinian parties will soon reconcile and establish a national unity Government.

We are pleased to note the relative calm and stability prevailing in Lebanon since the signing of the Doha agreement a year ago. We hope that the parliamentary elections scheduled for 7 June 2009 will be held in optimal conditions of security, transparency and fairness. We reaffirm our support for a solution achieved through dialogue and cooperation on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon. We would also like to reaffirm our support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

Finally, we welcome the proposal of Russia to convene an international conference on the Middle East peace process in Moscow later this year. We thank the Russian delegation for introducing the draft presidential statement, which, with flexibility and a spirit of cooperation, we are ready to support.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by thanking the Secretary-General for his presence here today and for the report he has given us on the situation in the Middle East. I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, for having convened this important ministerial meeting on the Middle East in a timely fashion, bearing in mind the current political dynamics in the key States in the region. I welcome the presence of the ministers, deputy ministers and permanent representatives who are here with us today.

Mexico believes that the establishment of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders on the basis of Security Council resolutions, is the only solution for lasting prosperity and peace between Israelis and Palestinians and more generally in the Middle East. In that spirit and conviction, Mexico has participated in international

efforts for peace, in particular the Annapolis conference, which seemed promising in its time in terms of making progress in this process. We will continue to actively support such initiatives, which will make it possible to arrive at a definitive settlement of the peace process in the Middle East.

Mexico also supports the efforts of the Quartet to create conditions favourable to relaunching the peace process and Security Council initiatives to ensure the implementation of its relevant resolutions on the basis of a consensus position. The delegation of Mexico would like to express its resolute willingness to work with the Russian Federation and the international community to promote the exchange of creative ideas on crafting new strategies that will make it possible to overcome obstacles and achieve progress in the peace process with all the urgency required by the situation.

Despite recent efforts, the situation in the Middle East remains critical. We see trends running counter to the peace process and to a lasting solution to the conflicts in the region; these are a cause of concern for my delegation. We can affirm that the necessary political conditions for a long-term understanding are lacking at this juncture.

In Gaza and southern Israel, despite the unilateral cessation of hostilities, outbreaks of violence in the field are still being reported and rocket attacks and the consequent reprisals and incursions by the Israeli armed forces in the Gaza Strip have continued. The difficulty of access for humanitarian aid and the severe restrictions on the supply of building materials, fuel and cash in Gaza have caused living conditions to significantly and continuously deteriorate, further generating a feeling of frustration and injustice that considerably affects the aspirations of the populations of the region and the international community as a whole.

In the West Bank, there are also reports of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers, incursions of the Israeli armed forces and terrorist attacks on the Israeli civilian population living in the surrounding areas. Similarly, restrictions on the free movement of people who live in that area remain, and the demolition and settlement policy in East Jerusalem and the West Bank continues.

My delegation again condemns all acts of violence, especially those directed against the civilian population, and urges all actors to comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law at all times.

We thank the Secretary-General for his executive summary to the Security Council on the report of the Board of Inquiry on the attacks on United Nations installations during the recent conflict in Gaza. My delegation hopes that in due course the report will be examined in detail by the Security Council itself.

We note that, in the present circumstances, the peace process not only may remain stagnant, but even runs the risk of reverting to the status quo ante, which would be unacceptable. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority must show the necessary will to resume negotiations as soon as possible and to put an end to the spiral of tension and violence that has characterized this region of the world during the past months.

Also, without question, the support of the neighbouring States and of the entire international community is necessary to overcome this obstacle to the peace process. To that end, the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), must be implemented without reservation.

My delegation is concerned that the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East have not been fully implemented. The maintenance of international peace and security is the fundamental purpose of the United Nations, and Member States have agreed to respect and ensure respect for decisions aimed at achieving that objective, in keeping with the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter.

Similarly, both parties will have to comply with all the main elements of the Road Map and to avoid undertaking actions that undermine trust and affect the negotiations process. In that regard, we particularly regret that the colonization, demolition and settlement activities continue in the Palestinian territories, since they infringe on the principles of the Road Map and threaten the peace process as a whole.

It is also essential that the efforts towards achieving intra-Palestinian reconciliation, fostered with the support of the Government of Egypt, continue. Only the creation of a united, democratic Palestinian Government committed to the peace process, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, can

lay the foundations for a peace process leading to a final solution to the conflict.

It is important to underscore the need for the support of international community in achieving tangible progress in the peace process. To that end, we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Quartet, in particular by United States President Barack Obama, to direct the parties to resume dialogue. We trust that the convening of an international conference in Moscow will, when it takes place, help to re-establish the bases for dialogue and negotiation.

We also welcome the commitment reaffirmed by King Abdullah II of Jordan in favour of a "57-State solution", thus demonstrating that peace can be achieved only through a joint effort. It also confirms the central position that the Arab Peace Initiative must hold in that process. We also recall the relevance of fulfilling the commitments made during the Sharm el-Sheikh conference last March, which are fundamental to the reconstruction of Gaza and the normalization of the lives of its inhabitants.

As the delegation of Mexico has repeatedly suggested, reconstruction and access for humanitarian aid will be possible only through the establishment of a monitoring mechanism that guarantees a lasting ceasefire, the opening of the border crossings and control of the illicit arms trade.

In parallel, it is essential that efforts towards achieving regional peace continue. We invite Israel and Syria to resume their indirect talks, which had been under the auspices of Turkey, and we call on Israel, Lebanon and Syria to fully comply with the provisions of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The normalization of relations among those neighbouring countries and withdrawal from the occupied territories will have a positive impact on the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

In the current context, the most substantial momentum that can be leant to the peace process must come from the actors directly involved in it. To that end, we urge Israel and the Palestinian Authority to hold a constructive dialogue without preconditions, on the basis of previous international agreements and obligations. We hope that in the coming weeks the political conditions to achieve that goal will be established.

The Security Council will have to ensure that both parties follow the guidelines of the Road Map, whose end objective is the establishment of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its support for adoption of the presidential statement drafted by the Russian Federation, which is an extremely timely and appropriate contribution towards promoting dialogue and negotiation to establish long-term regional peace. Mexico is ready to support and to actively participate in any initiative leading to the lasting settlement of one of the main conflicts on today's agenda, one that has an impact on international peace, security and stability.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Ruganda (Uganda): My delegation welcomes you, Mr. President, the Secretary-General and the Ministers present here to this debate on the Middle East. We thank you for organizing this debate at this time and at this level. It is a clear testimony to the commitment of the Security Council and of the international community to the ongoing efforts towards the resolution of the Middle East conflicts and towards ensuring lasting peace and security in the region.

We also welcome the Secretary-General and thank him for his briefing on the overall situation in the Middle East, the progress made so far, the challenges and what more needs to be done. Uganda commends the efforts and initiatives of the Quartet, Egypt, the Arab League and other actors in that regard.

We are convinced that a durable solution to the Middle East conflict can be achieved only through negotiations and agreement among the parties concerned. We continue to support all the parties in the Middle East in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region in which two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, as envisaged in resolution 1860 (2009). We call upon both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to remain committed to the irreversibility of the peace process, based on previous agreements and obligations.

With regard to the situation in Gaza, my delegation is encouraged by the reduction in the

number of incidents since the most recent briefing on this subject. We welcome the summary report of the Secretary-General and the Board of Inquiry. However, we are concerned at the fact that the situation remains fragile. There is still no permanent ceasefire, there remain incidents of violence, and the levels of humanitarian assistance reaching Gaza are below what is urgently required. There is an urgent need for a durable and fully respected ceasefire, for an end to arms smuggling and for the reopening of crossing points, as envisioned in resolution 1860 (2009).

We reiterate our commendation of Egypt and other parties for the role that they continue to play in facilitating the ceasefire talks between Israel and Palestine. We are also concerned that the divisions among Palestinian groups persist, and we call upon them to resolve their differences through dialogue and to reconcile and forge a common front.

We note with concern that, while $4.5 billion were pledged in March this year during the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, the provision of immediately needed materials for construction has not been possible, owing mainly to the blockade. We therefore call upon all parties concerned to ensure that those pledges are honoured and used for Gaza reconstruction programmes.

The situation in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory also raises concern. We note from the briefing that there has been a significant rise in settler activities both in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. We therefore call for an end to all settler activities.

With regard to Lebanon, Uganda welcomes the improvement in the political and security situations. We commend the steps taken to improve relations between Lebanon and Syria, including the establishment of diplomatic relations. My delegation also welcomes the commitment of the Lebanese leadership to free and fair parliamentary elections, scheduled for 7 June.

We urgently need to give new impetus to the search for a solution to the conflict in the Middle East. In that regard, Uganda fully supports the proposal by the Russian Federation to convene, in consultation with the Quartet and other parties, an international conference on the Middle East peace process in Moscow this year.

Finally, Uganda wishes to thank the Russian delegation for the draft presidential statement, which Uganda fully supports.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of China.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I am greatly honoured to attend this Security Council meeting on the Middle East as Special Envoy to Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. I wish to thank the Government of the Russian Federation for this initiative and you personally, Mr. President, for presiding over today's meeting. My thanks go also to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing on the current situation in the Middle East.

Resolution 1860 (2009), adopted by the Security Council in January this year, is the result of arduous efforts by all parties. It brought about the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire and created conditions for a resumption of the Middle East peace process. Regrettably, however, the resolution has not been implemented comprehensively or effectively. Israel should open the border crossings to Gaza in order to facilitate reconstruction efforts and improve access to Gaza for humanitarian supplies in order to ease the humanitarian crisis there. Israel should also put an end to its ongoing construction of settlements in the West Bank. Palestine should strengthen its internal unity and reconciliation process. The parties concerned must avoid the use of force, prevent civilian casualties and ensure the implementation of resolution 1860 (2009).

Political negotiation is the only path towards a lasting peace in the Middle East; the use of force will not achieve it. To the contrary, the cycle of violence will only exacerbate hatred and confrontation. The situation in the Middle East is now at a very critical stage. We hope that the parties concerned will hold firm in their determination to resolve the issue through political negotiations and refrain from any action that could undermine mutual trust and reconciliation in order to create conditions for a resumption of negotiations.

At the core of the Middle East issue is the Palestinian question. The ultimate solution to the Palestinian question is the realization of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. The parties concerned should continue to act in the spirit enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions and adhere to the principle of land for

peace and the two-State solution. They should press for the early achievement of reconciliation between Israel and Palestine, the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, and peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews. We hope that both Israel and Palestine will bear in mind the fundamental interests of their peoples and make the right choice.

The achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East depends on the resolution of all relevant issues in the region. The negotiations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel are important components of the Middle East peace process. They should be promoted as part of a holistic approach. At the same time, other volatile issues in the region should also be appropriately addressed in order to create an external environment favourable to the peace process.

The Middle East process cannot succeed without the assistance and support of the international community, which should continue to support the development of Palestine and immediately fulfil its commitment to reconstruction in Gaza. The parties concerned should uphold justice and strengthen mediation while, at the same time, considering the establishment of a broadly representative, balanced and effective multilateral mechanism to provide oversight and support for the Middle East peace process.

China supports the efforts of the Quartet. We welcome any initiative that will contribute to the Middle East peace process. We support Russia's proposal to hold an international conference on the Middle East in Moscow.

China always attaches great importance to the issue of the Middle East and is committed to promoting the peace process there. Chinese leaders have worked vigorously to promote peace and negotiations in the region through frequent communications with leaders of the countries concerned.

Two weeks ago, Chinese Minister for Foreign Affairs Yang Jiechi visited Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Syria, where he had in-depth exchanges of views of the leaders of those countries and with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States on the Middle East peace process. He put forward China's proposals on how to promote the Middle East peace process and provided further assistance to Palestine for its reconstruction efforts.

China will continue to work with the rest of the international community for the early and appropriate settlement of the Middle East issue and will play a constructive role in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to you for your initiative to hold this meeting of the Security Council at the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs to discuss the situation in the Middle East. I also thank the Secretary-General for his presence among us and for his statement.

The problem referred to as "the Middle East issue" started over 60 years ago, and yet, despite the passage of those 60 years, it has not grown old. It is still as urgent, complicated and severe as if it were only 60 months or 60 days old.

At the centre of the so-called Middle East problem is the Palestinian people, who were evicted from their land, rendered homeless and scattered throughout the world. Those among the Palestinian people who remain in Palestine have seen their rights denied, their homes demolished, their identity destroyed and their farms uprooted and razed, and thousands of them are now held in Israeli prisons. And now, at a time when the resistance of the Palestinian people against this occupation, this violence, this expulsion, this destruction and this imprisonment is being criminalized, we find on the opposite side, in Israel, an increased push towards extremism and the denial of the rights of others, as well as a growing spirit of hatred towards Palestinians and the entire Arab people.

Today, we face a new Government in Israel, whose diplomacy is led by a man who does not even bother to hide his hatred for Arabs and who had once called for the destruction of Egypt's Aswan High Dam and for the expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine.

At a time when some people describe the Government elected by all Palestinians as an extremist Government, when some countries have put that Government on a list of terrorist governments, and when the resistance movement in Lebanon is described

as terrorist, we do not hear anybody describing as extremist or terrorist Israeli Governments that launch wars, kill, destroy, uproot and raze farmlands and build a racist separation wall.

Since the Oslo Accords, the Palestinians, through the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, have been moving step by step in negotiations and peace talks with the Israelis. They have been moving from one international forum to another in the name of peace and in pursuit of a resolution of the Palestinian question. But what has the end result been?

On the Israeli side, we have an increase in the construction of settlements and the destruction of Palestinian homes, and today, in Jerusalem alone, more than 60,000 Palestinians face the destruction of their homes and who will be rendered homeless. Excavations under the Al-Aqsa mosque continue today, with the goal of destroying and completely removing the mosque. Israel also plans to construct an underground railway near the mosque.

The Arab Peace Initiative, which is now six years old, has been completely ignored by the Israelis. They want to take everything: they want the land, security and peace, and they offer nothing in return. The Israelis reject the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland; they refuse to give up weapons of mass destruction, which they continue to accumulate in their arsenals; they refuse to withdraw from the Golan; they reject a Palestinian State, which, in fact, is impossible to establish because Israel has taken the land and water sources, destroyed the infrastructure and imprisoned the Palestinian people.

There are now more than 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails, and we hear no discussion of their suffering or of the importance of releasing them. In the West Bank alone, there are more than 600 Israeli checkpoints, which make the daily lives of Palestinians an ongoing, continuous torture.

At the end of last year and early this year, Israel launched a comprehensive war against the Gaza Strip. The international conscience agrees that Israel's actions constituted war crimes which affected all segments of the civilian population. Thousands were killed or wounded, and internationally banned weapons were used. While we express our appreciation for the Board of Inquiry and the fact-finding mission concerning the Israeli aggression against Gaza, and specifically against United Nations facilities in Gaza, my delegation has also prepared a draft resolution to establish an impartial investigating committee to hold Israeli officials accountable and bring them to justice. We also look forward to the report of the independent fact-finding mission that was set up by the Human Rights Council to investigate all Israeli crimes in Gaza during the aggression.

Today, we need to raise the voice of right and the voice of courage. Humanity has entered the twenty-first century. We need a voice that calls for the renunciation of violence and war and the killing of man by his fellow man. We must all confront and stand up to all forms of racism.

Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in Al-Andalus — Audalusia — for many centuries. They lived in unprecedented brotherhood, and together they produced a civilization that laid the groundwork for a historic human renaissance that helped to take humanity from the darkness of the Middle Ages to the enlightenment and progress of recent centuries.

We therefore say today that we need to reproduce the Al-Andalus experience, which we believe we are capable of doing. That civilization was built on coexistence, tolerance and acceptance of the other.

With full appreciation for the initiatives, resolutions and plans seeking to resolve what we call the Middle East question, and based on a spirit of coexistence, our brother and leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi has published in the *White Book* his vision for a true solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. That vision includes the creation of a democratic State in Palestine where everyone lives equally, without discrimination based on religion or race. In that State, violence, confrontation and denial of the other would end. My country has confidence in the ability of the international community and of noble humanity to realize that dream, just as the dream of coexistence was realized in South Africa.

The *White Book*, written by our leader Muammar Al-Qadhafi, contains a chapter entitled "Isratine", describing a time when everybody in Palestine — Arabs and Jews — shall share equally in the land, water, freedom, and even the name of the State, as happened when African Tanganyika and Arab-origin Zanzibar were merged into one State called Tanzania.

In conclusion, although we do not agree with much of the content of the draft presidential statement submitted to us because it does not adequately address the issues of Israeli settlements, the occupation of the Golan Heights, the situation in Gaza and the Sheba'a Farms, in appreciation of the good intentions and positive attitude demonstrated in the preparation of the draft presidential statement, in recognition of my country's relationship with Russia and in order to preserve the unity and consensus of the Council, we will not object to the presidential statement.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): After consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council stressed the urgency of reaching comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Vigorous diplomatic action is needed to attain the goal set by the international community — lasting peace in the region, based on an enduring commitment to mutual recognition, freedom from violence, incitement and terror, and the two-State solution, building upon previous agreements and obligations.

"In this context, the Security Council recalls all its previous resolutions on the Middle East, in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 1860 (2009), and the Madrid principles, and the Council notes the importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

"The Security Council encourages the Quartet's ongoing work to support the parties in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"The Security Council reiterates its commitment to the irreversibility of the bilateral negotiations built upon previous agreements and obligations. The Council reiterates its call for renewed and urgent efforts by the parties and the international community to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders.

"The Security Council further calls upon the parties to fulfil their obligations under the Performance-Based Road Map, refraining from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on all core issues.

"The Security Council calls on all States and international organizations to support the Palestinian Government that is committed to the Quartet principles and the Arab Peace Initiative and respects the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Council encourages tangible steps towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation, including in support of Egypt's efforts, on this basis. It calls for assistance to help develop the Palestinian economy, to maximize the resources available to the Palestinian Authority and to build Palestinian institutions.

"The Security Council supports the proposal of the Russian Federation to convene, in consultation with the Quartet and the parties, an international conference on the Middle East peace process in Moscow in 2009."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/14.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6124

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6124th meeting

Wednesday, 13 May 2009, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. Rice
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) (S/2009/210)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-33564 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) (S/2009/210)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Czech Republic and Somalia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I wish to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Omaar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Omaar (Somalia) and Mr. Kaiser (Czech Republic) took seats at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and Ms. Susana Malcorra, Under-Secretary-General for Field Support.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009), do S/2009/210.

At this meeting, the Security Council w briefings by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Mr. Alain Le R Ms. Susana Malcorra.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: We meet today at a critical for Somalia. This is a time when the response international community to an embattled Gover pleas for help could make the difference b consolidating hopeful steps towards peace descent once again into anarchy and hopelessne

Since our last briefing to the Council, and the heavy fighting of the past few days, w witnessed in recent months new-found reasons t The Somalia peace process, facilitated Secretary-General's Special Represe Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, has produced a based Somali Government, led by President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, which enjoys the sup large segments of the population and States m of the Intergovernmental Authority on Developn

More importantly, the new Governm actively reaching out to opposition groups t national reconciliation. Negotiation, persuasi inclusion are at the core of the Government's s to achieve a lasting political settlement in Som a result, the Somali people have the best chance decades to end their suffering and move tow better and more stable future. And we, the intern community, have a unique opportunity to Somali leaders who have shown a commitm building peace. This opportunity must not be los

In order to assist Somalia to consolidate i fragile peace process and lay the foundati sustainable peace, reconstruction and developm Secretary-General has elaborated a political s aimed at, first, importing the peace proces Djibouti into Somalia; secondly, assistin Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to e dialogue with opposition forces and build a mass in support of the peace process; and, consolidating the Transitional Federal Institution

In this connection, the United Nations P Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and the United N country team paid three high-level visits to Mog to hold consultations with the Government at th

senior levels. These consultations focused on the preparations for the Brussels donors' conference and follow-up on the implementation of proposals presented in the conference of the International Contact Group on Somalia held in Brussels in February.

UNPOS has also worked with the Government of Kenya in organizing training for senior civil servants. Discussions have been held in Nairobi with Government representatives on the establishment of the Joint Security Committee. We anticipate agreement on the future workings of the committee in additional missions of UNPOS to Mogadishu.

For the Government to succeed in its efforts to consolidate peace, it has to deal with the continuing security challenge. The Government must be backed by a credible security force that can help it to negotiate from a position of strength and contain hard-line elements bent on undermining it. The Government must also be able to deliver security and demonstrate clear dividends of peace and national reconciliation to Somali communities.

The efforts to strengthen the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and build Somalia's security institutions respond to these needs and are part and parcel of the broader United Nations political strategy I mentioned a moment ago. Success in these efforts will give peace a chance to take root as well as create the conditions for a dramatic improvement in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and early recovery and development activities.

It is in support of this political strategy and these peacemaking efforts that the Secretary-General has proposed, in his latest report to the Council (S/2009/210), a three-phased approach to addressing the ongoing security challenge: first, by supporting the establishment of Somali security institutions and strengthening AMISOM; secondly, by establishing a United Nations light footprint in Somalia; and thirdly, by deploying, at an appropriate time, a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

The Brussels donors' conference on 23 April was organized with the aim of mobilizing international support for the first phase, that is, the strengthening of Somali security institutions and AMISOM forces. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners — including the Government of Somalia, the African Union and the European Union — in making the conference a success. The next urgent step is to ensure the full receipt of the pledged amount of $213 million. It is expected that AMISOM will receive $160 million and Somali security institutions $66 million in both cash and in kind pledges.

AMISOM continues to play a critical role in Somalia. We thank the Governments of Uganda and Burundi for their continued commitment in the country. We are also pleased with the offer of a battalion from Sierra Leone, which would raise the strength of the force to more than 5,000 troops.

Let me turn now to the dangers of the current moment. On 9 May, there was an attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government and take power in Mogadishu by force. This attempted coup was, we understand, led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys and included Al-Shabaab fighters. While the Government has been able to repel these forces so far, the situation remains quite fragile. Media reports indicate that at least 120 people have been killed in heavy fighting around Mogadishu and that thousands of civilians have fled to other parts of Somalia. It is noteworthy that the reports indicate that the attacking forces include an increasing number of foreign fighters. In fact, an Al-Shabaab spokesman openly embraced and admitted the presence of the foreign fighters only a few days ago. The Government's capacities, on its side, have a limit, because of a lack of resources.

Through these last few days, the Government has continued with some success to negotiate a resolution to the conflict. Yesterday, religious leaders called for a ceasefire and condemned the fighting. While the ceasefire was initially accepted by all sides, it would seem that, this afternoon, Al-Shabaab resumed attacks. It is not clear whether the attacking forces are as cohesive as they were prior to the call for ceasefire from the religious leaders.

A point of interest in the report is that the trained TFG forces seem to have constituted the backbone of the Government's defence. This is an encouraging sign of the emergence of a nascent national force. This latest surge in violence is clearly a response to the Government's strategy to reach out and build a critical mass in support of peace. As the Government gains success in its strategy of negotiation, persuasion and inclusion, radical elements within the opposition feel threatened and increase the level of violence.

International support for the Government of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is particularly

crucial now. The success of the Brussels conference convened by the Secretary-General gives ground for hope in this regard. The imperative now is, as I said, to ensure that the assistance reaches President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's Government and AMISOM quickly in order to limit the ability of hardliners to threaten once again the ongoing efforts to build a Somali State.

Such practical support can help the Government strengthen its ability to address the security challenge, become more cohesive, carry out reconstruction and development planning, and generate and collect revenue. The Government is committed to moving forward and we should give it credit for the progress it has made in three short months. The Government has formulated a budget linked to the payment of security forces, public investment and civil service wages. It is collecting revenue from Mogadishu port and airport. It has worked with UNPOS and members of the international community to establish the Joint Security Committee in Mogadishu, to carry out a security sector assessment, and to develop a security sector framework.

Establishing effective governance inside Somalia is one of the keys to bringing law and order to the waters off its coast. A strong Somali State would not only curb the problem of piracy in the short term, but would also address the underlying long-term social and economic causes. It is important to understand that piracy is turning into a business that, if left unchecked, will create localized criminal economies with leaders increasingly able to resist efforts to integrate them into a broader national structure. That having been said, the efforts of the international maritime forces are having a significant effect. As a result of these operations, the cost to pirates of their actions is steadily increasing as they have to travel further to capture ships.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions being made by the various naval forces to deal with this problem. Their operations are an integral part of a wider effort that includes assisting local communities to undertake alternative forms of employment, tracking the flow of money to identify those benefiting from piracy, prosecuting those responsible, and creating a coastal security force.

We welcome the establishment of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. Following the working group meeting of the Contact Group held in Cairo on 16 and 17 March, the United Nations was requested by the Contact Group to propose a number of counter-piracy initiatives on land. These initiatives will be presented to the next Contact Group meeting in May. In order to ensure greater coherence between the different components in response to piracy, a coordination mechanism is being established under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. This architecture brings together efforts to address the piracy challenge on the high seas, on land, in the region and internationally.

In conclusion, it is evident that the only lasting solution for Somalia will be one that is created and led by the Somalis themselves. The Government's efforts at building a consensus for reconciliation are slowly gaining ground, despite the serious challenge by well-funded radicals. The international community must make a vital investment at this time to nurture the fragile peace process, help the Government establish its authority throughout the country and build its security and rule of law institutions. Now is not the time to analyse and discuss, but to provide concrete help while it can still make a difference.

We must continue to engage in a credible and practical manner. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to bring stability to that long-troubled country and its people. The consequences of inaction would be borne not only by Somalis, but by the region and the world at large.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Le Roy.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): The report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/210) was prepared at the Security Council's request pursuant to resolution 1863 (2009), in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare recommendations on the possibility of establishing a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia.

At the outset, I should like to echo Under-Secretary-General Pascoe by recalling that today's meeting is taking place in a very alarming security context in Mogadishu. It is clear that we are at a watershed moment for Somalia and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). The international community must now firmly support the TFG and leave no stone unturned in preventing extremist

elements from frustrating this unique opportunity to stabilize Somalia.

The peace process remains extremely fragile. Progress generated by the Djibouti peace process requires the ongoing support of the international community. At the same time, we must ensure that the role of the international community is accepted by Somalis and that it not exacerbate tensions on the ground.

It is in that spirit that the Secretary-General's report offers a holistic approach that takes into account all the United Nations strategic objectives in Somalia, including the political aspect, security, development and the distribution of humanitarian assistance. The report notes the Security Council's expression of intent, as formulated in paragraph 4 of resolution 1863 (2009), to establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia, and seeks to define a cautious and carefully calibrated approach to that end. In that respect, the report takes the volatile security situation into account and attempts to craft a strategy tailored to the new risks and opportunities in the field.

(*spoke in English*)

As indicated by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe, the report recommends a three-phase incremental approach. In the first phase, the United Nations would maintain its current engagement, approved in resolution 1863 (2009). This consists of support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to enable it to fulfil its core functions of providing security for TFG personnel, key infrastructure and strategic installations, and assistance in building Somalia's security institutions. Under-Secretary-General Malcorra will shortly provide further details on that very important point. This would be pursued alongside support for the political process and the humanitarian and recovery activities of the United Nations country team. Progress in the implementation of the first phase would be assessed after three to four months.

If security conditions permit, United Nations engagement would then be extended to the second phase, which would entail adding a light United Nations footprint in Mogadishu consisting of elements from the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, the Department of Field Support and the United Nations country team, which would continue to pursue the strategic objectives laid out in the first phase. These two phases would form transitional steps, allowing the United Nations to implement the full support package to AMISOM, assess the progress of the efforts of the TFG to build security and develop its own security institutions, and, more importantly, gauge the acceptability of a United Nations presence in Mogadishu.

The second phase, like the first, would be assessed three to four months after the commencement of its implementation. Depending on progress, the Security Council would then review the United Nations role and decide whether conditions are conducive to a shift to the final phase, in which a United Nations peacekeeping operation could be established to take over from AMISOM. That operation could be authorized and deployed along the lines set out in the Secretary-General's present and previous reports.

It is important to emphasize that this incremental approach is a flexible strategy. While an indicative timescale for review of progress is appropriate, movement from one phase to another should be based on the evolution of prevailing conditions, and not on a rigid timetable.

Throughout all three phases, it will be important to maintain contingency plans for continuing United Nations engagement on the political and humanitarian fronts in case of a degeneration in the security situation that makes it untenable to establish and retain an international presence in Mogadishu. At the same time, we should be ready to move quickly to take advantage of security improvements should they occur.

In that regard, I recall to the Council the advice of the Secretary-General that, while the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation remains our goal, such an operation should be deployed only after the fulfilment of certain basic preconditions for success. Important benchmarks will include the implementation of a credible ceasefire, consent to the deployment by all the major Somali actors on the ground, and adequate pledges of troops and required military capacities by Member States. It remains the assessment of the Secretary-General that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation at this stage, in the absence of those conditions, would be a high-risk operation and that an ill-timed mission would fail. Inserting a United Nations peacekeeping operation under the current conditions

would attract resistance, which could detract from the political process.

As Council members are aware, some key Somali political players, as well as religious and clan elders, are deeply divided over the issue of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. As such, deploying a peacekeeping operation under the current circumstances could undermine ongoing efforts at political reconciliation. It would also risk attacks against peacekeepers, which could draw the United Nations force into the conflict.

In that regard, it is important to bear in mind lessons from previous United Nations peacekeeping experiences in Somalia and ensure that the Organization decides on the appropriate engagement this time. The Secretary-General's report argues for the prudent approach I have outlined. At the same time, it acknowledges that the peace process is at a fluid stage and that all options must remain on the table.

The Secretariat has continued to engage possible troop contributors in preparation for an eventual United Nations peacekeeping operation. On 19 February 2009, as set out in the report, the Office of Military Affairs, which is in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), sent notes verbales to 60 Member States to ascertain if they would be willing to contribute troops, should the Security Council decide to establish a peacekeeping operation for Somalia.

To date, 14 Member States have responded. Ten of the responses were negative. However, on 27 April, DPKO received an offer from Bangladesh indicating its willingness to contribute naval and air force assets. Bangladesh noted that it would require United Nations assistance to ensure that its contingents received the necessary equipment to enable their deployment. Since the publication of the Secretary-General's report, DPKO has also received verbal indications from Indonesia that it would be ready to provide troops and to take a lead role in a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia. Pakistan has also indicated willingness to provide maritime assets, while Uruguay has offered to contribute military observers. We are now ascertaining the details of those offers as part of our ongoing contingency planning for the possible eventual establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation under the right conditions.

As has been said, the path to durable security in Somalia lies in the hands of Somalis themselves. The central aspect of the strategy set out in the Secretary-General's report is the building of the Somali National Security Force and a police force that are capable of taking over responsibility for security in the country. In that regard, we of course encourage Council members to continue to lend their support to the Government in developing security institutions, in line with a clear plan and in the framework of the rule of law.

We all hope that, in the coming weeks, the Government will expedite its preparation of a strategic plan for the building of national security forces. That would enable bilateral partners to determine the nature of assistance required and what they can best contribute in a coordinated way. The United Nations has been providing expertise to that process through the Joint Security Committee. We are also working with AMISOM to build on the existing effort of the United Nations Development Programme to train the Somali police.

(*spoke in French*)

In the coming weeks, the United Nations will continue to contribute to that process by providing experts and deploying its good offices. That will, of course, be done under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We hope that the international community will also provide its support and effectively coordinate its efforts through the Joint Security Committee in order to support the Government's own efforts. Of course, also in the coming weeks, we will continue to closely monitor the situation and regularly inform the Council of all ongoing efforts, including as regards contingency planning for a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Susana Malcorra.

Ms. Malcorra: I appreciate this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the steps being taken on the support side to strengthen the security institutions of Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Resolution 1863 (2009) established a strategy of support for security in Mogadishu, integrating voluntary contributions through a United Nations trust fund, bilateral donor support for AMISOM and Somali forces, and United Nations-funded logistical support for AMISOM. Each is equally critical if we are to

succeed in establishing the peace and security in Somalia necessary to pursue stable governance and lasting recovery efforts.

The contributions pledged at the 23 April donors' conference were very positive — more than $200 million was pledged. They are expected to support the significant requirements identified to strengthen AMISOM and to develop Somali security institutions. While the success of the donors' conference highlights the level of international commitment to security in Somalia, the disparate funding mechanisms and approaches represent a coordination challenge. Measures must be taken to ensure that we arrive at an alignment of views to address gaps and avoid potential areas of duplication. Work is being done on that as we speak.

The gains achieved by Somali leaders and the international community to build peace must not be lost. The current situation on the ground provides evidence that Somalia's nascent and yet-fragile peace process must be protected. Our window for action is small. The disbursement of donor pledges must be expedited.

There are still a number of critical requirements to meeting the security challenges. Those include the acquisition and maintenance of military equipment for AMISOM, such are armoured personnel carriers and patrol boats. The commitment of the African Union (AU) to bringing the AMISOM force up to its full mandated strength of 8,000 troops must be supported to ensure the protection of key installations in Mogadishu, including the airport, seaport and other strategic areas. Sierra Leone pledged a full battalion this week. That is a critical pledge. All measures must be taken to hasten its deployment and ensure its full capacities.

With regard to AMISOM, the complementary strategies of United Nations-funded logistics and donor support for other requirements are both essential if we are to establish conditions for AMISOM to source the additional troops and equipment it needs to reach its mandated strength and operate effectively. The African Union is mapping all donor trust fund and in-kind contributions to ensure appropriate coordination and address gaps and possible areas of duplication. Although progress has been hampered by the volatile and unpredictable security situation in Mogadishu — which has seen a rise in insurgent attacks, which are becoming more sophisticated, coordinated and lethal — key milestones have been achieved. Let me now speak about some of them.

On 22 April, essential expendable assets were delivered to AMISOM in Mogadishu. This delivery, the first one the United Nations has made, included United Nations supplies of security equipment and field defence storage, pharmaceuticals and other essential medical supplies. Specialized support equipment, one airfield firefighting truck, engineering vehicles, information and communications equipment and related infrastructure were delivered to Entebbe in April for the initial training of AMISOM troops before being delivered to Mogadishu. These training programmes are in progress and are scheduled to be concluded by the end of this month. With that, all equipment and trained troops will be deployed into Mogadishu to take full advantage of this additional support.

Separately, following the liquidation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the United Nations-owned equipment was deployed into Mogadishu by the end of this past March. Among other things, the equipment included 400 prefabricated accommodation and ablution units, which are very important for the AMISOM troops. Action is under way to establish a maintenance arrangement and assistance in construction.

A comprehensive funding proposal for 2009 and 2010, based on the current Security Council resolution and United Nations standards of support and operational requirements, has been submitted for comptroller review and should be before the General Assembly shortly.

The United Nations support to AMISOM will require unprecedented action in ensuring effectiveness and accountability, with our significant United Nations presence in the theatre of operations and with multiple ways to channel contributions. The core team of the United Nations Support Office has been established, recruitment of the staff is ongoing, and the initial team is already deployed in Nairobi and working closely with the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, AMISOM and the AU in Addis Ababa.

Resolution 1863 (2009) requires that a memorandum of understanding be signed with the AU and AMISOM to ensure that support provided through the United Nations is used transparently and effectively

for the intended purposes. This includes payments and other support provided through the United Nations trust fund. The draft memorandum of understanding has been finalized and is being sent this week to the African Union for its final approval. Assistance arrangements are also being negotiated with a Member State for the United Nations to fund a continuation of the existing AMISOM life-support services through a vendor until the United Nations completes its own procurement processes. All procurement processes are launched, with proposals starting to arrive this week.

A small passenger jet is expected to be deployed in Nairobi later this month. As well as providing for United Nations passenger movement in support of AMISOM, this jet is critical to providing standing medical evacuation capacity, which AMISOM lacks today.

To advance the construction of the AMISOM headquarters and level 2 hospital, current greenfield sites in Mogadishu are being assessed. We are also undertaking the construction of a small infrastructure at the airport to have minimal accommodations for an initial footprint deployment.

Lastly, in direct response to the 9 May insurgent attack in close proximity to the AMISOM troops who are protecting Villa Somalia, the seat of the presidency, the Department of Field Support is deploying trauma kits and airfield lighting equipment to enable AMISOM to conduct 24-hour operations at Mogadishu and to improve immediate casualty treatment. Arrangements are also under way to provide AMISOM with a strategic reserve of rations to mitigate any threat to the AMISOM supply chain.

In conclusion, we have a unique opportunity to support this process. Our partnership with the AU is key to ensuring streamlined support among all the stakeholders involved. One major challenge stems from the need to deliver this level of support within the standards of oversight traditionally associated with a United Nations peacekeeping operation of an analogous size. Such a level of oversight calls for an international United Nations footprint on the ground in Somalia, which is at present precluded by the current security situation. Until the United Nations support office for AMISOM can establish a small footprint in Mogadishu, interim oversight mechanisms will be put in place, using United Nations, AU and contractual personnel in order to achieve our core objectives.

To conclude, I must tell you, Sir, that I have to go to the Fifth Committee to present the overall peacekeeping budget, so I will be leaving shortly and will return a little later.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Malcorra for her briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Omaar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

Mr. Omaar (Somalia): Allow me to take this opportunity to thank, first and foremost, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the United Nations as a whole for organizing the donors' conference in Brussels on 23 April, and the international community and the donor organizations for the pledges and commitments that were made and fulfilled at that event.

Secondly, allow me to also take the opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for the report (S/2009/210) that is before us today. We welcome this report. We believe that it outlines in a clear format the basic structure and partnership between the Somali Government and the international community for the peace and stability of Somalia, which are the desire and the goal that have been sought for the past 20 years.

If I may return to that, I think this is the first occasion upon which the international community and Somalia have established an effective basis for stabilizing Somalia and for establishing the rule of law. The rule of law was the basis of the agreement that was reached in Djibouti, and the central parameter and the backbone of that policy is peace. This is what we have sought. It was the basis on which the President was elected, the cabinet named and the ministers authorized. I am pleased to confirm that the Somali people in all parts of the country, be it in the North, in Central Somalia or in the South, have not only welcomed, but in essence have seen this as what they have lacked and have been looking for.

We therefore welcome the report and we are fully ready, willing and able to work with the Secretary-General, the United Nations and its agencies to implement these proposals for the empowerment of the Somali security forces, the capacity-building of the institutions of governance and the expanded ability of

the African Union Mission in Somalia. We are committed and ready to move ahead.

I would, on this occasion, however, like to take a moment to speak on current events, as matters are developing on the ground. I personally left Mogadishu on Friday afternoon, and these events started on Wednesday evening. The Government and the President, as confirmed by the council of religious elders, have been ready, are ready and will be ready for a ceasefire and negotiations to implement peace.

We have never missed any opportunity to encourage any party, whether in the country or outside, not to remain outside the process or unengaged by us. With regard to the current leadership of the opposition, Hizbul Islam and Mr. Hassan Dahir Aweys, we have sought every opportunity, including in the past three days, to make personal contact with him to find out what it will take to stop the bloodshed. That is our only requirement: stop the bloodshed and let us talk. Our door is open. We are not setting preconditions.

Our difficulty, throughout these past three months, has been that we cannot get an answer. Since the election of the President on 30 January, we have sought out Mr. Aweys and Hizbul Islam. We have gone to every part of the globe, and we have offered our table and our hand for that purpose. But if we cannot get a response, we are left in silence. With all that we see happening today in Mogadishu — with all the bombings and firefights that are going on — the only reply that we have received has been this past week.

Yet, our commitment is the commitment that we made to the international community, the Secretary-General and the Security Council, that we support the rule of law, the re-establishment of the State institutions, good-neighbourliness with our neighbouring countries in the subregion, respect for human rights, structured and implemented by the organs of the State, and respect for all faiths, which is the basis of sharia law. Sharia respects every faith and there is no compulsion in faith. That is the way that we have implemented it. So we remain committed to that programme, and we will not be dislodged.

The issue, though, remains what answer can we expect and what answer can the world expect from the opposition. We have sought to engage at every opportunity, but we have no clarity either on their requirements locally or on their proposals internationally. The Somali people, whom I represent here today, are not willing to give up or to miss the opportunity that is here today. We will do whatever needs to be done. We ask for the Council's assistance, as it has pledged to give us the resources, the support and the partnership that we previously enjoyed, so that the turmoil in Somalia, both on land and in international waters, can be addressed and we can contribute to resolving the problems offshore in the high seas.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Foreign Minister Omaar of Somalia for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Kaiser (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation for having been invited to participate in today's meeting on behalf of the European Union. I would also like to thank Under-Secretaries-General Malcorra, Pascoe and Le Roy for their respective briefings, and extend my gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia for his contribution to today's debate.

The EU acknowledges the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report (S/2009/210). Given the current security conditions, we believe that the proposed phased approach of continued support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the strengthening of Somali security institutions is the best available option. The European Union takes note that, after the two first phases, the Secretary-General recommends that the Security Council decide whether the conditions set out in his report and the timing are conducive to a shift to the final phase, in which a United Nations peacekeeping operation could be established to take over from AMISOM.

Despite the positive developments at the political level and the powerful political momentum created by the Djibouti peace process, the overall security

situation on the ground remains extremely volatile, as demonstrated by the recent outburst of fighting in Mogadishu. In that context, the EU welcomes the continued efforts of President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed to reach out to those groups that remain opposed to the Djibouti process.

The humanitarian situation, the continued plight of the internally displaced persons and the dramatic increase in pirate attacks off the Somalia coast and on the international high seas are still of great concern. The European Union welcomes the pledges made during the International Conference in Support of the Somali Security Institutions and the African Union Mission in Somalia, which was held in Brussels on 22 and 23 April 2009, under the joint auspices of the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the League of Arab States. The pledges made at that conference amounted to €164 million — both for AMISOM needs not covered by the United Nations logistical support package and to support the Somali transitional security institutions — of which the European Commission alone pledged more than €80 million. That testifies to the strong commitment of the European Union to working with the international community to help the new Somali Transitional Federal Government to bring about peace and stability.

The European Union stresses that building up the Somali security and police forces is vital to the country's stability. The European Union also calls on the international community to step up its support for Somali institutions in order to take on challenges and opportunities to further consolidate reconciliation, restore peace and rebuild the country. The European Union remains committed to engaging in such support. In Brussels, the international community also highlighted the need to continue to address the issue of piracy, inter alia, through an international naval presence, emphasizing that land-based solutions to the root causes of piracy must be urgently addressed.

The European Union would also like to express its gratitude to AMISOM troop-contributing countries for their contributions to stabilizing the situation in Mogadishu, given the difficult operating environment. It is also important to continue to support AMISOM through the United Nations logistical support package, through the United Nations trust funds and bilaterally, with a coordinated approach.

In addition, the European Union and its member States are supporting AMISOM in the training of the Somali National Security Force and Somali police. With regard to support for AMISOM, the European Commission has so far committed a total of €40 million. Moreover, several EU member States have offered financial, material and logistical assistance.

The EU's priority is to support good governance, human rights and the rule of law. At the Brussels pledging conference, the European Commission announced that it planned to allocate more than €215 million to those areas for the period 2008-2013. The European Union also provides humanitarian emergency relief and other forms of assistance to ease the suffering of the Somali people.

The European Union is contributing to international efforts to curb piracy off the Somali coast and in the Gulf of Aden. The EU is ready to continue, through the deployment of the maritime military mission Atalanta, to protect United Nations vessels delivering the logistical support package to AMISOM and shipments of humanitarian relief, as well as surveillance and patrolling in maritime areas. At the same time, the EU is aware of and committed to helping to meet the need to address the root causes of piracy through sustainable development and the full restoration of the rule of law in Somalia.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Council that the European Union, together with other members of the international community, stands ready to continue assisting Somalia. However, Somalia must do its part. The immediate goal is to develop its own National Security Force and civilian police force. A long-term security strategy is a precondition for future development. The European Union welcomes the announcement by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in Brussels that the issue of security is one of his Government's highest priorities. Any meaningful progress can be based only on Somalia's ownership of and responsibility for its implementation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6125

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6125th meeting

Friday, 15 May 2009, 12.40 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koné
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Guillermet
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Turkey	Mr. Müftüoğlu
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang Hoang Giang

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-33882 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reiterates its previous resolutions and presidential statements on Somalia, in particular its resolution 1863 (2009), which reaffirmed the Djibouti Peace Agreement as representing the basis for a lasting resolution of the conflict in Somalia.

"The Security Council reaffirms its support for the Transitional Federal Government as the legitimate authority in Somalia under the Transitional Federal Charter and condemns the recent renewal in fighting led by Al-Shabaab and other extremists, which constitutes an attempt to remove that legitimate authority by force. The Council demands that opposition groups immediately end their offensive, put down their arms, renounce violence and join reconciliation efforts.

"The Security Council urges the international community to provide its full support to the Transitional Federal Government in order to strengthen the National Security Force and the Somali Police force, reiterates its support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), expresses its appreciation for the contribution of troops by the Governments of Burundi and Uganda, and condemns any hostilities towards AMISOM.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the loss of life and the worsening humanitarian situation arising out of the renewed fighting, and calls on all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular to respect the security of civilians, humanitarian workers and AMISOM personnel.

"The Security Council also expresses its concern over reports that Eritrea has supplied arms to those opposing the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in breach of the United Nations arms embargo, and calls on the Sanctions Monitoring Group to investigate.

"The Security Council reiterates its support for the political process outlined in the Transitional Federal Charter, which provides a framework for reaching a lasting political solution in Somalia. The ongoing attempts to take power by force can only delay the political process and prolong the suffering of the Somali people."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2009/15.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6126

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 May 2009

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 6126th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 May 2009, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 22 May 2009, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 6126th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

"The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus."

09-34687 (E) 220509

Please recycle

United Nations S/PV.6127

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6127th meeting

Tuesday, 26 May 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Japan	Mr. Okuda
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Turkey	Mr. Ilkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hurd
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) (S/2009/210)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-34891 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolution 1863 (2009) (S/2009/210)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohamed (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/266, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Members of the Council also have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, document S/2009/210.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Austria, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1872 (2009).

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Uganda, who wishes to make a statement following the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): I would just like to say that we salute everybody for supporting the British-sponsored resolution on Somalia, as well as to say that the African Union would like to see the Council take even stronger measures against those elements who are sponsoring rebellion and terrorist activities in Somalia. Also, the African Union pledges to continue to provide unequivocal support to the Council so that the problem of Somalia can at long last come to a speedy end.

My last comment is that the situation in Mogadishu has been very bad. But I am happy to say that the Government is now pushing the rebels from sectors of Mogadishu. We expect that the current trend of pushing the rebels away from Mogadishu and towards eventual defeat will continue.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.